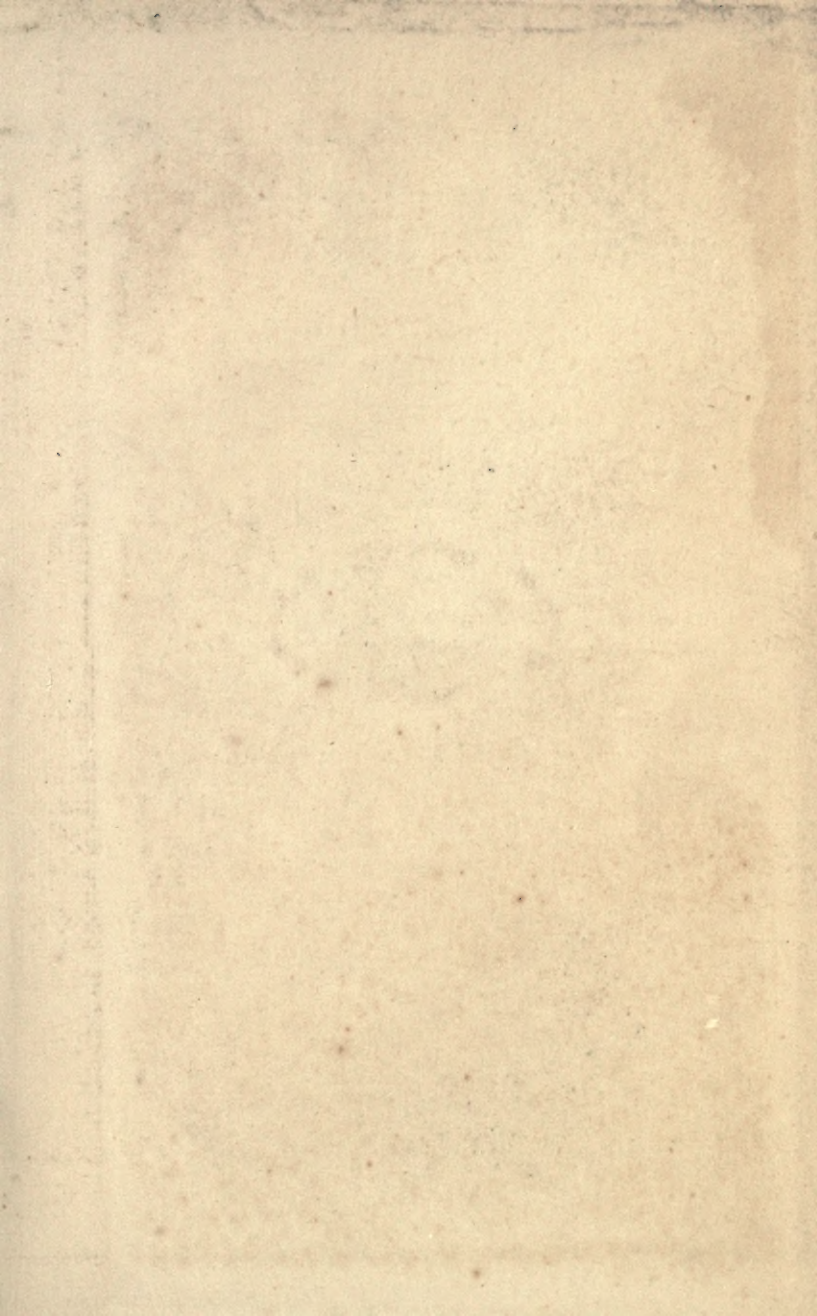




J. Anderson

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# English Men of Letters

EDITED BY JOHN MORLEY

VOL. XIII

BACON

BUNYAN

BENTLEY





*G. O. A.*

BACON

By R. W. CHURCH

BUNYAN

By J. A. FROUDE

BENTLEY

By R. C. JEBB

London

MACMILLAN AND CO.

AND NEW YORK

1895





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BACON







# B A C O N

BY

R. W. CHURCH,

DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S,  
HONORARY FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE

London:

MACMILLAN AND CO.

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1892

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## PREFACE.

IN preparing this sketch it is needless to say how deeply I am indebted to Mr. Spedding and Mr. Ellis, the last editors of Bacon's writings, the very able and painstaking commentators, the one on Bacon's life, the other on his philosophy. It is impossible to overstate the affectionate care and high intelligence and honesty with which Mr. Spedding has brought together and arranged the materials for an estimate of Bacon's character. In the result, in spite of the force and ingenuity of much of his pleading, I find myself most reluctantly obliged to differ from him; it seems to me to be a case where the French saying, cited by Bacon, in one of his commonplace books, holds good—" *Par trop se débattre, la vérité se perd.*"<sup>1</sup> But this does not diminish the debt of gratitude which all who are interested about Bacon must owe to Mr. Spedding. I wish also to acknowledge the assistance which I have received from Mr. Gardiner's *History of England* and Mr. Fowler's edition of the *Novum Organum*: and not least from M. de Rémusat's work on Bacon, which seems to me the most complete and the most just estimate

<sup>1</sup> *Promus*: edited by Mrs. H. Pott, p. 475.



both of Bacon's character and work, which has yet appeared ; though even in this clear and dispassionate survey we are reminded by some misconceptions, strange in M. de Rémusat, how what one nation takes for granted is incomprehensible to its neighbour, and what a gap there is still, even in matters of philosophy and literature, between the whole Continent and ourselves :—

“*Penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos.*”

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# BACON.

## CHAPTER I.

### EARLY LIFE.

THE life of Francis Bacon is one which it is a pain to write or to read. It is the life of a man endowed with as rare a combination of noble gifts as ever was bestowed on a human intellect ; the life of one with whom the whole purpose of living and of every day's work was to do great things to enlighten and elevate his race, to enrich it with new powers, to lay up in store for all ages to come a source of blessings which should never fail or dry up ; it was the life of a man who had high thoughts of the ends and methods of law and government, and with whom the general and public good was regarded as the standard by which the use of public power was to be measured ; the life of a man who had struggled hard and successfully for the material prosperity and opulence which makes work easy and gives a man room and force for carrying out his purposes. All his life long his first and never-sleeping passion was the romantic and splendid ambition after knowledge, for the conquest of nature and for the service of man ; gathering up in himself the spirit and longings and efforts of

all discoverers and inventors of the arts, as they are symbolised in the mythical Prometheus. He rose to the highest place and honour ; and yet that place and honour were but the fringe and adornment of all that made him great. It is difficult to imagine a grander and more magnificent career ; and his name ranks among the few chosen examples of human achievement. And yet it was not only an unhappy life ; it was a poor life. We expect that such an overwhelming weight of glory should be borne up by a character corresponding to it in strength and nobleness. But that is not what we find. No one ever had a greater idea of what he was made for, or was fired with a greater desire to devote himself to it. He was all this. And yet being all this, seeing deep into man's worth, his capacities, his greatness, his weakness, his sins, he was not true to what he knew. He cringed to such a man as Buckingham. He sold himself to the corrupt and ignominious Government of James I. He was willing to be employed to hunt to death a friend like Essex, guilty, deeply guilty to the State, but to Bacon the most loving and generous of benefactors. With his eyes open he gave himself up without resistance to a system unworthy of him ; he would not see what was evil in it, and chose to call its evil good ; and he was its first and most signal victim.

Bacon has been judged with merciless severity. But he has also been defended by an advocate whose name alone is almost a guarantee for the justness of the cause which he takes up, and the innocence of the client for whom he argues. Mr. Spedding devoted nearly a lifetime and all the resources of a fine intellect and an earnest conviction to make us revere as well as admire

Bacon. But it is vain. It is vain to fight against the facts of his life : his words, his letters. "Men are made up," says a keen observer, "of professions, gifts and talents ; and also of *themselves*."<sup>1</sup> With all his greatness, his splendid genius, his magnificent ideas, his enthusiasm for truth, his passion to be the benefactor of his kind, with all the charm that made him loved by good and worthy friends, amiable, courteous, patient, delightful as a companion, ready to take any trouble,—there was in Bacon's "self" a deep and fatal flaw. He was a pleaser of men. There was in him that subtle fault, noted and named both by philosophy and religion, in the *ἄρεσκος* of Aristotle, the *ἀνθρωπάρεσκος* of St. Paul, which is more common than it is pleasant to think, even in good people, but which if it becomes dominant in a character is ruinous to truth and power. He was one of the men, there are many of them, who are unable to release their imagination from the impression of present and immediate power, face to face with themselves. It seems as if he carried into conduct the leading rule of his philosophy of nature, *parendo vincitur*. In both worlds, moral and physical, he felt himself encompassed by vast forces, irresistible by direct opposition. Men whom he wanted to bring round to his purposes were as strange, as refractory, as obstinate, as impenetrable as the phenomena of the natural world. It was no use attacking in front and by a direct trial of strength people like Elizabeth or Cecil or James : he might as well think of forcing some natural power in defiance of natural law. The first word of his teaching about nature is that she must be won by observation of

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Mozley.



her tendencies and demands ; the same radical disposition of temper reveals itself in his dealings with men ; they, too, must be won by yielding to them, by adapting himself to their moods and ends ; by spying into the drift of their humour, by subtly and pliantly falling in with it, by circuitous and indirect processes, the fruit of vigilance and patient thought. He thought to direct, while submitting apparently to be directed. But he mistook his strength. Nature and man are different powers and under different laws. He chose to please man, and not to follow what his soul must have told him was the better way. He wanted, in his dealings with men, that sincerity on which he insisted so strongly in his dealings with nature and knowledge. And the ruin of a great life was the consequence.

Francis Bacon was born in London on the 22d of January 156 $\frac{0}{1}$ , three years before Galileo. He was born at York House, in the Strand ; the house which, though it belonged to the Archbishops of York, had been lately tenanted by Lord Keepers and Lord Chancellors, in which Bacon himself afterwards lived as Lord Chancellor, and which passed after his fall into the hands of the Duke of Buckingham, who has left his mark in the Water Gate which is now seen, far from the river, in the garden of the Thames Embankment. His father was Sir Nicholas Bacon, Elizabeth's first Lord Keeper, the fragment of whose effigy in the Crypt of St. Paul's is one of the few relics of the old Cathedral before the fire. His uncle by marriage was that William Cecil who was to be Lord Burghley. His mother, the sister of Lady Cecil, was one of the daughters of Sir Antony Cook, a person deep in the confidence of the reforming party,

who had been tutor of Edward VI. She was a remarkable woman, highly accomplished after the fashion of the ladies of her party, and as would become her father's daughter and the austere and laborious family to which she belonged. She was "exquisitely skilled in the Greek and Latin tongues;" she was passionately religious according to the uncompromising religion which the exiles had brought back with them from Geneva, Strassburg, and Zurich, and which saw in Calvin's theology a solution of all the difficulties, and in his discipline a remedy for all the evils, of mankind. This means that his boyhood from the first was passed among the high places of the world—at one of the greatest crises of English history—in the very centre and focus of its agitations. He was brought up among the chiefs and leaders of the rising religion, in the houses of the greatest and most powerful persons of the State, and naturally, as their child, at times in the Court of the Queen, who joked with him, and called him "her young Lord Keeper." It means also that the religious atmosphere in which he was brought up was that of the nascent and aggressive Puritanism, which was not satisfied with the compromises of the Elizabethan Reformation, and which saw in the moral poverty and incapacity of many of its chiefs a proof against the great traditional system of the Church which Elizabeth was loath to part with, and which, in spite of all its present and inevitable shortcomings, her political sagacity taught her to reverence and trust.

At the age of twelve he was sent to Cambridge, and put under Whitgift at Trinity. It is a question which recurs continually to readers about those times and their

precocious boys, what boys were then? For whatever was the learning of the universities, these boys took their place with men and consorted with them, sharing such knowledge as men had, and performing exercises and hearing lectures according to the standard of men. Grotius at eleven was the pupil and companion of Scaliger and the learned band of Leyden; at fourteen he was part of the company which went with the ambassadors of the States-General to Henry IV.; at sixteen, he was called to the bar, he published an out-of-the-way Latin writer, Martianus Capella, with a learned commentary, and he was the correspondent of De Thou. When Bacon was hardly sixteen he was admitted to the Society of "Ancients" of Gray's Inn, and he went in the household of Sir Amyas Paulet, the Queen's Ambassador, to France. He thus spent two years in France, not in Paris alone, but at Blois, Tours, and Poitiers. If this was precocious, there is no indication that it was thought precocious. It only meant that clever and promising boys were earlier associated with men in important business than is customary now. The old and the young heads began to work together sooner. Perhaps they felt that there was less time to spare. In spite of instances of longevity, life was shorter for the average of busy men, for the conditions of life were worse.

Two recollections only have been preserved of his early years. One is that, as he told his chaplain, Dr. Rawley, late in life, he had discovered, as far back as his Cambridge days, the "unfruitfulness" of Aristotle's method. It is easy to make too much of this. It is not uncommon for undergraduates to criticise their text-



books: it was the fashion with clever men, as, for instance, Montaigne, to talk against Aristotle without knowing anything about him: it is not uncommon for men who have worked out a great idea to find traces of it, on precarious grounds, in their boyish thinking. Still, it is worth noting that Bacon himself believed that his fundamental quarrel with Aristotle had begun with the first efforts of thought, and that this is the one recollection remaining of his early tendency in speculation. The other is more trustworthy, and exhibits that inventiveness which was characteristic of his mind. He tells us in the *De Augmentis* that when he was in France he occupied himself with devising an improved system of cypher-writing—a thing of daily and indispensable use for rival statesmen and rival intriguers. But the investigation, with its call on the calculating and combining faculties, would also interest him, as an example of the discovery of new powers by the human mind.

In the beginning of 1579 Bacon, at eighteen, was called home by his father's death. This was a great blow to his prospects. His father had not accomplished what he had intended for him, and Francis Bacon was left with only a younger son's "narrow portion." What was worse, he lost one whose credit would have served him in high places. He entered on life, not as he might have expected, independent and with court favour on his side, but with his very livelihood to gain—a competitor at the bottom of the ladder for patronage and countenance. This great change in his fortunes told very unfavourably on his happiness, his usefulness, and, it must be added, on his character. He accepted it, indeed, manfully, and at

once threw himself into the study of the law as the profession by which he was to live. But the law, though it was the only path open to him, was not the one which suited his genius, or his object in life. To the last he worked hard and faithfully, but with doubtful reputation as to his success, and certainly against the grain. And this was not the worst. To make up for the loss of that start in life of which his father's untimely death had deprived him, he became, for almost the rest of his life, the most importunate and most untiring of suitors.

In 1579 or 1580 Bacon took up his abode at Gray's Inn, which for a long time was his home. He went through the various steps of his profession. He began, what he never discontinued, his earnest and humble appeals to his relative the great Lord Burghley, to employ him in the Queen's service, or to put him in some place of independence: through Lord Burghley's favour he seems to have been pushed on at his Inn, where, in 1586, he was a Bencher; and in 1584 he came into Parliament for Melcombe Regis. He took some small part in Parliament: but the only record of his speeches is contained in a surly note of Recorder Fleetwood, who writes as an old member might do of a young one talking nonsense. He sat again for Liverpool in the year of the Armada (1588), and his name begins to appear in the proceedings. These early years, we know, were busy ones. In them Bacon laid the foundation of his observations and judgments on men and affairs; and in them the great purpose and work of his life was conceived and shaped. But they are more obscure years than might have been expected in the case of a man of

Bacon's genius and family, and of such eager and unconcealed desire to rise and be at work. No doubt he was often pinched in his means; his health was weak, and he was delicate and fastidious in his care of it: plunged in work, he lived very much as a recluse in his chambers, and was thought to be reserved, and what those who disliked him called arrogant. But Bacon was ambitious—ambitious, in the first place, of the Queen's notice and favour. He was versatile, brilliant, courtly, besides being his father's son; and considering how rapidly bold and brilliant men were able to push their way and take the Queen's favour by storm, it seems strange that Bacon should have remained fixedly in the shade. Something must have kept him back. Burghley was not the man to neglect a useful instrument with such good will to serve him. But all that Mr. Spedding's industry and profound interest in the subject has brought together throws but an uncertain light on Bacon's long disappointment. Was it the rooted misgiving of a man of affairs like Burghley at that passionate contempt of all existing knowledge and that undoubting confidence in his own power to make men know, as they never had known, which Bacon was even now professing? Or was it something soft and over-obsequious in character which made the uncle, who knew well what men he wanted, disinclined to encourage and employ the nephew? Was Francis not hard enough, not narrow enough, too full of ideas, too much alive to the shakiness of current doctrines and arguments on religion and policy? Was he too open to new impressions, made by objections or rival views? Or did he show signs of wanting backbone to stand amid difficulties and threatening prospects?

Did Burghley see something in him of the pliability which he could remember as the serviceable quality of his own young days—which suited those days of rapid change, but not days when change was supposed to be over, and when the qualities which were wanted were those which resist and defy it? The only thing that is clear is that Burghley, in spite of Bacon's continual applications, abstained to the last from advancing his fortunes.

Whether employed by government or not, Bacon began at this time to prepare those carefully-written papers on the public affairs of the day, of which he has left a good many. In our day they would have been pamphlets or magazine articles. In his they were circulated in manuscript, and only occasionally printed. The first of any importance is a letter of advice to the Queen, about the year 1585, on the policy to be followed with a view to keeping in check the Roman Catholic interest at home and abroad. It is calm, sagacious, and, according to the fashion of the age, slightly Machiavellian. But the first subject on which Bacon exhibited his characteristic qualities, his appreciation of facts, his balance of thought, and his power, when not personally committed, of standing aloof from the ordinary prejudices and assumptions of men round him, was the religious condition and prospects of the English Church. Bacon had been brought up in a Puritan household of the straitest sect. His mother was an earnest, severe, and intolerant Calvinist, deep in the interests and cause of her party, bitterly resenting all attempts to keep in order its pretensions. She was a masterful woman, claiming to meddle with her brother-in-law's policy, and though a most affectionate



mother she was a woman of violent and ungovernable temper. Her letters to her son Antony, whom she loved passionately, but whom she suspected of keeping dangerous and papistical company, show us the imperious spirit in which she claimed to interfere with her sons; and they show also that in Francis she did not find all the deference which she looked for. Recommending Antony to frequent "the religious exercises of the sincerer sort," she warns him not to follow his brother's advice or example. Antony was advised to use prayer twice a day with his servants. "Your brother," she adds, "is too negligent therein." She is anxious about Antony's health, and warns him not to fall into his brother's ill-ordered habits; "I verily think your brother's weak stomach to digest hath been much caused and confirmed by untimely going to bed, and then musing *nescio quid* when he should sleep, and then in consequent by late rising and long lying in bed; whereby his men are made slothful and himself continueth sickly. But my sons haste not to hearken to their mother's good counsel in time to prevent." It seems clear that Francis Bacon had shown his mother that not only in the care of his health, but in his judgment on religious matters, he meant to go his own way. Mr. Spedding thinks that she must have had much influence on him: it seems more likely that he resented her interference, and that the hard and narrow arrogance which she read into the Gospel produced in him a strong reaction. Bacon was obsequious to the tyranny of power, but he was never inclined to bow to the tyranny of opinion; and the tyranny of Puritan infallibility was the last thing to which he was likely to submit. His mother

would have wished him to sit under Cartwright and Travers. The friend of his choice was the Anglican preacher, Dr. Andrewes, to whom he submitted all his works, and whom he called his "inquisitor general;" and he was proud to sign himself the pupil of Whitgift, and to write for him—the archbishop of whom Lady Bacon wrote to her son Antony, veiling the dangerous sentiment in Greek, "that he was the ruin of the church, for he loved his own glory more than Christ's."

Certainly, in the remarkable paper on *Controversies in the Church* (1589), Bacon had ceased to feel or to speak as a Puritan. The paper is an attempt to compose the controversy by pointing out the mistakes in judgment, in temper, and in method on both sides. It is entirely unlike what a Puritan would have written: it is too moderate, too tolerant, too neutral, though like most essays of conciliation it is open to the rejoinder from both sides—certainly from the Puritan—that it begs the question by assuming the unimportance of the matters about which each contended with so much zeal. It is the confirmation, but also the complement, and in some ways the correction of Hooker's contemporary view of the quarrel which was threatening the life of the English Church, and not even Hooker could be so comprehensive and so fair. For Hooker had to defend much that was indefensible: he had to defend a great traditional system, just convulsed by a most tremendous shock—a shock and alteration, as Bacon says, "the greatest and most dangerous that can be in a State," in which old clues and habits and rules were confused and all but lost; in which a frightful amount of personal incapacity and worthlessness had, from sheer want of men, risen to the high

places of the Church ; and in which force and violence, sometimes of the most hateful kind, had come to be accepted as ordinary instruments in the government of souls. Hooker felt too strongly the unfairness, the folly, the intolerant aggressiveness, the malignity of his opponents,—he was too much alive to the wrongs inflicted by them on his own side, and to the incredible absurdity of their arguments,—to do justice to what was only too real in the charges and complaints of those opponents. But Bacon came from the very heart of the Puritan camp. He had seen the inside of Puritanism—its best as well as its worst side. He witnesses to the humility, the conscientiousness, the labour, the learning, the hatred of sin and wrong, of many of its preachers. He had heard, and heard with sympathy, all that could be urged against the bishops' administration, and against a system of legal oppression in the name of the Church. Where religious elements were so confusedly mixed, and where each side had apparently so much to urge on behalf of its claims, he saw the deep mistake of loftily ignoring facts, and of want of patience and forbearance with those who were scandalised at abuses, while the abuses, in some cases monstrous, were tolerated and turned to profit. Towards the bishops and their policy, though his language is very respectful, for the government was implicated, he is very severe. They punish and restrain, but they do not themselves mend their ways or supply what was wanting ; and theirs are "*injurie potentiorum*,"—"injuries come from them that have the upper hand." But Hooker himself did not put his finger more truly and more surely on the real mischief of the Puritan movement : on the immense outbreak in it of unreasonable party

spirit and visible personal ambition,—“these are the true successors of Diotrephes and not my lord bishops:”—on the gradual development of the Puritan theory till it came at last to claim a supremacy as unquestionable and intolerant as that of the Papacy: on the servile affectation of the fashions of Geneva and Strassburg: on the poverty and foolishness of much of the Puritan teaching—its inability to satisfy the great questions which it raised in the soul, its unworthy dealing with scripture—“naked examples, conceited inferences, and forced allusions, which mine into all certainty of religion”—“the word, the bread of life, they toss up and down, they break it not:” on their undervaluing of moral worth, if it did not speak in their phraseology—“as they censure virtuous men by the names of *civil* and *moral*, so do they censure men truly and godly wise, who see into the vanity of their assertions, by the name of *politiques*; saying that their wisdom is but carnal and savouring of man’s brain.” Bacon saw that the Puritans were aiming at a tyranny, which, if they established it, would be more comprehensive, more searching, and more cruel than that of the older systems; but he thought it a remote and improbable danger, and that they might safely be tolerated for the work they did in education and preaching, “because the work of exhortation doth chiefly rest upon these men, and they have a zeal and hate of sin.” But he ends by warning them lest “that be true which one of their adversaries said, *that they have but two small wants—knowledge and love.*” One complaint that he makes of them is a curious instance of the changes of feeling, or at least of language, on moral subjects. He accuses them of “having pronounced generally, and without difference,



all untruths unlawful," forgetful of the Egyptian midwives and Rahab, and Solomon, and even of Him "who, the more to touch the hearts of the disciples with a holy dalliance, made as though he would have passed Emmaus." He is thinking of their failure to apply a principle which was characteristic of his mode of thought, that even a statement about a virtue like veracity "hath limit as all things else have:" but it is odd to find Bacon bringing against the Puritans the converse of the charge which his age, and Pascal afterwards, brought against the Jesuits. The essay, besides being a picture of the times as regards religion, is an example of what was to be Bacon's characteristic strength and weakness: his strength, in lifting up a subject, which had been degraded by mean and wrangling disputations, into a higher and larger light, and bringing to bear on it great principles and the results of the best human wisdom and experience, expressed in weighty and pregnant maxims; his weakness, in forgetting, as, in spite of his philosophy, he so often did, that the grandest major premisses need well-proved and ascertained minors, and that the enunciation of a principle is not the same thing as the application of it. Doubtless there is truth in his closing words; but each party would have made the comment that what he had to prove, and had not proved, was that by following his counsel they would "love the whole better than a part."

"Let them not fear . . . the fond calumny of *neutrality*: but let them know that is true which is said by a wise man, *that neutrals in contentions are either better or worse than either side*. These things have I in all sincerity and simplicity set down touching the controversies which now trouble the Church of England: and that without all art and insinuation, and therefore not like to



be grateful to either part. Notwithstanding, I trust what has been said shall find a correspondence in their minds which are not embarked in partiality, and which *love the whole better than a part.*"

Up to this time, though Bacon had showed himself capable of taking a broad and calm view of questions which it was the fashion among good men, and men who were in possession of the popular ear, to treat with narrowness and heat, there was nothing to disclose his deeper thoughts—nothing foreshadowed the purpose which was to fill his life. He had, indeed, at the age of twenty-five, written a "youthful" philosophical essay, to which he gave the pompous title "*Temporis Partus Maximus*," "the Greatest Birth of Time." But he was thirty-one when we first find an indication of the great idea and the great projects which were to make his name famous. This indication is contained in an earnest appeal to Lord Burghley for some help which should not be illusory. Its words are distinct and far-reaching; and they are the first words from him which tell us what was in his heart. The letter has the interest to us of the first announcement of a promise which, to ordinary minds, must have appeared visionary and extravagant, but which was so splendidly fulfilled; the first distant sight of that sea of knowledge which henceforth was opened to mankind, but on which no man, as he thought, had yet entered. It contains the famous avowal—"I have taken all knowledge to be my province"—made in the confidence born of long and silent meditations and questionings, but made in a simple good faith which is as far as possible from vain boastfulness.

"MY LORD—With as much confidence as mine own honest and faithful devotion unto your service and your honourable correspon-

dence unto me and my poor estate can breed in a man, do I commend myself unto your Lordship. I wax now somewhat ancient ; one and thirty years is a great deal of sand in the hour glass. My health, I thank God, I find confirmed ; and I do not fear that action shall impair it, because I account my ordinary course of study and meditation to be more painful than most parts of action are. I ever bare a mind (in some middle place that I could discharge) to serve her Majesty, not as a man born under Sol, that loveth honour ; nor under Jupiter, that loveth business (for the contemplative planet carrieth me away wholly) ; but as a man born under an excellent sovereign, that deserveth the dedication of all men's abilities. Besides, I do not find in myself so much self-love, but that the greater parts of my thoughts are to deserve well (if I be able) of my friends, and namely of your Lordship ; who, being the Atlas of this commonwealth, the honour of my house, and the second founder of my poor estate, I am tied by all duties, both of a good patriot and of an unworthy kinsman, and of an obliged servant, to employ whatsoever I am to do you service. Again, the meanness of my estate doth somewhat move me : for, though I cannot accuse myself that I am either prodigal or slothful, yet my health is not to spend, nor my course to get. Lastly, I confess that I have as vast contemplative ends, as I have moderate civil ends : for I have taken all knowledge to be my province ; and if I could purge it of two sorts of rovers, whereof the one with frivolous disputations, confutations, and verborisities, the other with blind experiments and auricular traditions and impostures, hath committed so many spoils, I hope I should bring in industrious observations, grounded conclusions, and profitable inventions and discoveries ; the best state of that province. This, whether it be curiosity or vain glory, or nature, or (if one take it favourably), *philanthropia*, is so fixed in my mind as it cannot be removed. And I do easily see, that place of any reasonable countenance doth bring commandment of more wits than of a man's own ; which is the thing I greatly affect. And for your Lordship, perhaps you shall not find more strength and less encounter in any other. And if your Lordship shall find now, or at any time, that I do seek or affect any place whereunto any that is nearer unto your Lordship shall be concurrent, say then that I am a most dishonest man. And if your Lordship will not carry me on, I will not do as Anaxagoras

did, who reduced himself with contemplation unto voluntary poverty, but this I will do—I will sell the inheritance I have, and purchase some lease of quick revenue, or some office of gain that shall be executed by deputy, and so give over all care of service, and become some sorry book-maker, or a true pioner in that mine of truth, which (he said) lay so deep. This which I have writ unto your Lordship is rather thoughts than words, being set down without all art, disguising, or reservation. Wherein I have done honour both to your Lordship's wisdom, in judging that that will be best believed of your Lordship which is truest, and to your Lordship's good nature, in retaining nothing from you. And even so I wish your Lordship all happiness, and to myself means and occasions to be added to my faithful desire to do you service. From my lodgings at Gray's Inn."

This letter, to his unsympathetic and<sup>a</sup>suspicious, but probably not unfriendly relative, is the key to Bacon's plan of life; which, with numberless changes of form, he followed to the end. That is, a profession, steadily, seriously, and laboriously kept to, in order to provide the means of living; and beyond that, as the ultimate and real end of his life, the pursuit, in a way unattempted before, of all possible human knowledge, and of the methods to improve it and make it sure and fruitful. And so his life was carried out. On the one hand, it was a continual and pertinacious seeking after government employment, which could give credit to his name and put money in his pocket—attempts by general behaviour, by professional services when the occasion offered, by putting his original and fertile pen at the service of the government, to win confidence, and to overcome the manifest indisposition of those in power to think that a man who cherished the chimera of universal knowledge could be a useful public servant. On the other hand, all the while, in the crises of his

disappointment or triumph, the one great subject lay next his heart, filling him with fire and passion—how really to know, and to teach men to know indeed, and to use their knowledge so as to command nature; the great hope to be the reformer and restorer of knowledge in a more wonderful sense than the world had yet seen in the reformation of learning and religion, and in the spread of civilised order in the great states of the Renaissance time. To this he gave his best and deepest thoughts; for this he was for ever accumulating, and for ever rearranging and reshaping those masses of observation and inquiry and invention and mental criticism which were to come in as parts of the great design which he had seen in the visions of his imagination, and of which at last he was only able to leave noble fragments, incomplete after numberless recastings. This was not indeed the only, but it was the predominant and governing interest of his life. Whether as solicitor for Court favour or public office; whether drudging at the work of the law, or managing State prosecutions; whether writing an opportune pamphlet against Spain or Father Parsons, or inventing a “device” for his Inn or for Lord Essex to give amusement to Queen Elizabeth; whether fulfilling his duties as member of Parliament or rising step by step to the highest places in the Council Board and the State; whether in the pride of success or under the amazement of unexpected and irreparable overthrow, while it seemed as if he was only measuring his strength against the rival ambitions of the day, in the same spirit and with the same object as his competitors, the true motive of all his eagerness and all his labours was not theirs.



He wanted to be powerful, and still more to be rich : but he wanted to be so, because without power and without money he could not follow what was to him the only thing worth following on earth—a real knowledge of the amazing and hitherto almost unknown world in which he had to live. Bacon, to us, at least, at this distance, who can only judge him from partial and imperfect knowledge, often seems to fall far short of what a man should be. He was not one of the high-minded and proud searchers after knowledge and truth, like Descartes, who were content to accept a frugal independence so that their time and their thoughts might be their own. Bacon was a man of the world, and wished to live in and with the world. He threatened sometimes retirement, but never with any very serious intention. In the Court was his element, and there were his hopes. Often there seems little to distinguish him from the ordinary place-hunters, obsequious and selfish, of every age ; little to distinguish him from the servile and insincere flatterers, of whom he himself complains, who crowded the antechambers of the great Queen, content to submit with smiling face and thankful words to the insolence of her waywardness and temper, in the hope, more often disappointed than not, of hitting her taste on some lucky occasion, and being rewarded for the accident by a place of gain or honour. Bacon's history, as read in his letters, is not an agreeable one ; after every allowance made for the fashions of language, and the necessities of a suitor, there is too much of insincere profession of disinterestedness, too much of exaggerated profession of admiration and devoted service, too much of disparagement and insinuation against others, for a



man who respected himself. He submitted too much to the miserable conditions of rising which he found. But, nevertheless it must be said that it was for no mean object, for no mere private selfishness or vanity, that he endured all this. He strove hard to be a great man and a rich man. But it was that he might have his hands free and strong and well furnished to carry forward the double task of overthrowing ignorance and building up the new and solid knowledge on which his heart was set: that immense conquest of nature on behalf of man which he believed to be possible, and of which he believed himself to have the key.

The letter to Lord Burghley did not help him much. He received the reversion of a place, the Clerkship of the Council, which did not become vacant for twenty years. But these years of service declined and place withheld were busy and useful ones. What he was most intent upon, and what occupied his deepest and most serious thought, was unknown to the world round him, and probably not very intelligible to his few intimate friends, such as his brother Antony and Dr. Andrewes. Meanwhile he placed his pen at the disposal of the authorities, and though they regarded him more as a man of study than of practice and experience, they were glad to make use of it. His versatile genius found another employment. Besides his affluence in topics, he had the liveliest fancy and most active imagination. But that he wanted the sense of poetic fitness and melody, he might almost be supposed, with his reach and play of thought, to have been capable, as is maintained in some eccentric modern theories, of writing Shakespeare's plays. No man ever had a more imaginative power of illustration, drawn from the most remote and

most unlikely analogies ; analogies often of the quaintest and most unexpected kind, but often also not only felicitous in application but profound and true. His powers were early called upon for some of those sportive compositions in which that age delighted on occasions of rejoicing or festival. Three of his contributions to these "devices" have been preserved : two of them composed in honour of the Queen, as "triumphs," offered by Lord Essex, one probably in 1592 and another in 1595 ; a third for a Gray's Inn revel in 1594. The "devices" themselves were of the common type of the time, extravagant, odd, full of awkward allegory and absurd flattery, and running to a prolixity which must make modern lovers of amusement wonder at the patience of those days ; but the "discourses" furnished by Bacon are full of fine observation and brilliant thought and wit and happy illustration, which, fantastic as the general conception is, raises them far above the level of such fugitive trifles.

Among the fragmentary papers belonging to this time which have come down, not the least curious are those which throw light on his manner of working. While he was following out the great ideas which were to be the basis of his philosophy, he was as busy and as painstaking in fashioning the instruments by which they were to be expressed ; and in these papers we have the records and specimens of this preparation. He was a great collector of sentences, proverbs, quotations, sayings, illustrations, anecdotes, and he seems to have read sometimes, simply to gather phrases and apt words. He jots down at random any good and pointed remark which comes into his thought or his memory ; at another time he groups

a set of stock quotations with a special drift, bearing on some subject, such as the faults of universities or the habits of lawyers. Nothing is too minute for his notice. He brings together in great profusion mere forms, varied turns of expression, heads and tails of clauses and paragraphs, transitions, connections ; he notes down fashions of compliment, of excuse or repartee, even morning and evening salutations ; he records neat and convenient opening and concluding sentences, ways of speaking more adapted than others to give a special colour or direction to what the speaker or writer has to say—all that hook-and-eye work, which seems so trivial and passes so unnoticed as a matter of course, and which yet is often hard to reach, and which makes all the difference between tameness and liveliness, between clearness and obscurity—all the difference, not merely to the ease and naturalness, but often to the logical force of speech. These collections it was his way to sift and transcribe again and again, adding as well as omitting. From one of these, belonging to 1594 and the following years, the *Promus of Formularies and Elegancies*, Mr. Spedding has given curious extracts ; and the whole collection has been recently edited by Mrs. Henry Pott. Thus it was that he prepared himself for what, as we read it, or as his audience heard it, seems the suggestion or recollection of the moment. Bacon was always much more careful of the value or aptness of a thought than of its appearing new and original. Of all great writers he least minds repeating himself, perhaps in the very same words ; so that a simile, an illustration, a quotation pleases him, he returns to it—he is never tired of it ; it obviously gives him satisfaction to introduce it again and again. These collections

of odds and ends illustrate another point in his literary habits. His was a mind keenly sensitive to all analogies and affinities, impatient of a strict and rigid logical groove, but spreading as it were tentacles on all sides in quest of chance prey, and quickened into a whole system of imagination by the electric quiver imparted by a single word, at once the key and symbol of the thinking it had led to. And so he puts down word or phrase, so enigmatical to us who see it by itself, which to him would wake up a whole train of ideas, as he remembered the occasion of it—how at a certain time and place this word set the whole moving, seemed to breathe new life and shed new light, and has remained the token, meaningless in itself, which reminds him of so much.

When we come to read his letters, his speeches, his works, we come continually on the results and proofs of this early labour. Some of the most memorable and familiar passages of his writings are to be traced from the storehouses which he filled in these years of preparation. An example of this correspondence between the note-book and the composition is to be seen in a paper belonging to this period, written apparently to form part of a masque, or as he himself calls it, a "Conference of Pleasure," and entitled the *Praise of Knowledge*. It is interesting because it is the first draught which we have from him of some of the leading ideas and most characteristic language about the defects and the improvement of knowledge, which were afterwards embodied in the *Advancement* and the *Novum Organum*. The whole spirit and aim of his great reform is summed up in the following fine passage :—

"Facility to believe, impatience to doubt, temerity to assever,



glory to know, doubt to contradict, end to gain, sloth to search, seeking things in words, resting in a part of nature,—these and the like have been the things which have forbidden the happy match between the mind of man and the nature of things, and in place thereof have married it to vain notions and blind experiments. . . . Therefore, no doubt, the *sovereignty of man* lieth hid in knowledge: wherein many things are reserved which kings with their treasures cannot buy nor with their force command; their spials and intelligencers can give no news of them; their seamen and discoverers cannot sail where they grow. Now we govern nature in opinions, but we are thrall unto her in necessity; but if we could be led by her in invention, we should command her in action."

To the same occasion as the discourse on the *Praise of Knowledge* belongs, also, one in *Praise of the Queen*. As one is an early specimen of his manner of writing on philosophy, so this is a specimen of what was equally characteristic of him—his political and historical writing. It is, in form, necessarily a panegyric, as high-flown and adulatory as such performances in those days were bound to be. But it is not only flattery. It fixes with true discrimination on the points in Elizabeth's character and reign which were really subjects of admiration and homage. Thus of her unquailing spirit at the time of the Spanish invasion:—

"Lastly, see a Queen, that when her realm was to have been invaded by an army the preparation whereof was like the travail of an elephant, the provisions infinite, the setting forth whereof was the terror and wonder of Europe; it was not seen that her cheer, her fashion, her ordinary manner, was anything altered; not a cloud of that storm did appear in that countenance wherein peace doth ever shine; but with excellent assurance and advised security she inspired her council, animated her nobility, redoubled the courage of her people; still having this noble apprehension, not only that she would communicate her fortune with them, but that it was she that would protect them, and



not they her ; which she testified by no less demonstration than her presence in camp. Therefore that magnanimity that neither feareth greatness of alteration, nor the vows of conspirators, nor the power of the enemy, is more than heroical."

These papers, though he put his best workmanship into them, as he invariably did with whatever he touched, were of an ornamental kind. But he did more serious work. In the year 1592 a pamphlet had been published on the Continent in Latin and English, *Responsio ad Edictum Reginae Angliæ*, with reference to the severe legislation which followed on the Armada, making such charges against the Queen and the Government as it was natural for the Roman Catholic party to make, and making them with the utmost virulence and unscrupulousness. It was supposed to be written by the ablest of the Roman pamphleteers, Father Parsons. The Government felt it to be a dangerous indictment ; and Bacon was chosen to write the answer to it. He had additional interest in the matter, for the pamphlet made a special and bitter attack on Burghley, as the person mainly responsible for the Queen's policy. Bacon's reply is long and elaborate, taking up every charge, and reviewing from his own point of view the whole course of the struggle between the Queen and the supporters of the Roman Catholic interest abroad and at home. It cannot be considered an impartial review ; besides that it was written to order, no man in England could then write impartially in that quarrel ; but it is not more one-sided and uncandid than the pamphlet which it answers, and Bacon is able to recriminate with effect, and to show gross credulity and looseness of assertion on the part of the Roman Catholic advocate. But reli-

gion had too much to do with the politics of both sides for either to be able to come into the dispute with clean hands: the Roman Catholics meant much more than toleration, and the sanguinary punishments of the English law against priests and Jesuits were edged by something even keener than the fear of treason. But the paper contains some large surveys of public affairs, which probably no one at that time could write but Bacon. Bacon never liked to waste anything good which he had written; and much of what he had written in the panegyric in *Praise of the Queen* is made use of again, and transferred with little change to the pages of the *Observations on a Libel*.

## CHAPTER II.

### BACON AND ELIZABETH.

THE last decade of the century, and almost of Elizabeth's reign (1590-1600), was an eventful one to Bacon's fortunes. In it the vision of his great design disclosed itself more and more to his imagination and hopes, and with more and more irresistible fascination. In it he made his first literary venture, the first edition of his *Essays* (1597), ten in number, the first-fruits of his early and ever watchful observation of men and affairs. These years, too, saw his first steps in public life, the first efforts to bring him into importance, the first great trials and tests of his character. They saw the beginning and they saw the end of his relations with the only friend who, at that time, recognised his genius and his purposes, certainly the only friend who ever pushed his claims; they saw the growth of a friendship which was to have so tragical a close, and they saw the beginnings and causes of a bitter personal rivalry which was to last through life, and which was to be a potent element hereafter in Bacon's ruin. The friend was the Earl of Esséx. The competitor was the ablest, and also the most truculent and unscrupulous of English lawyers, Edward Coke.

While Bacon, in the shade, had been laying the foundations of his philosophy of nature, and vainly suing for legal or political employment, another man had been steadily rising in the Queen's favour and carrying all before him at Court, Robert Devereux, Lord Essex; and with Essex Bacon had formed an acquaintance which had ripened into an intimate and affectionate friendship. We commonly think of Essex as a vain and insolent favourite, who did ill the greatest work given him to do—the reduction of Ireland; who did it ill from some unexplained reason of spite and mischief; and who, when called to account for it, broke out into senseless and idle rebellion. This was the end: but he was not always thus. He began life with great gifts and noble ends: he was a serious, modest, and large-minded student both of books and things; and he turned his studies to full account. He had imagination and love of enterprise, which gave him an insight into Bacon's ideas such as none of Bacon's contemporaries had. He was a man of simple and earnest religion; he sympathised most with the Puritans, because they were serious and because they were hardly used. Those who most condemn him acknowledge his nobleness and generosity of nature. Bacon in after days, when all was over between them, spoke of him as a man always *patientissimus veri*; “the more plainly and frankly you shall deal with my lord,” he writes elsewhere, “not only in disclosing particulars, but in giving him *caveats* and admonishing him of any error which in this action he may commit (such is his lordship's nature), the better he will take it.” “He must have seemed,” says Mr. Spedding, a little too grandly, “in the eyes of Bacon like the hope of the

world." The two men, certainly, became warmly attached. Their friendship came to be one of the closest kind, full of mutual services, and of genuine affection on both sides. It was not the relation of a great patron and useful dependant; it was, what might be expected in the two men, that of affectionate equality. Each man was equally capable of seeing what the other was, and saw it. What Essex's feelings were towards Bacon the results showed. Bacon, in after years, repeatedly claimed to have devoted his whole time and labour to Essex's service. Holding him, he says, to be "the fittest instrument to do good to the State, I applied myself to him in a manner which I think rarely happeneth among men; neglecting the Queen's service, mine own fortune, and, in a sort, my vocation, I did nothing but advise and ruminate with myself . . . anything that might concern his lordship's honour, fortune, or service." The claim is far too wide. The "Queen's service" had hardly as yet come much in Bacon's way, and he never neglected it when it did come, nor his own fortune or vocation: his letters remain to attest his care in these respects. But, no doubt, Bacon was then as ready to be of use to Essex, the one man who seemed to understand and value him, as Essex was desirous to be of use to Bacon.

And it seemed as if Essex would have the ability as well as the wish. Essex was, without exception, the most brilliant man who ever appeared at Elizabeth's Court, and it seemed as if he were going to be the most powerful. Leicester was dead. Burghley was growing old, and indisposed for the adventures and levity which, with all her grand power of ruling, Elizabeth loved. She needed a favourite, and Essex was unfortunately marked



out for what she wanted. He had Leicester's fascination without his mean and cruel selfishness. He was as generous, as gallant, as quick to descry all great things in art and life, as Philip Sidney, with more vigour and fitness for active life than Sidney. He had not Raleigh's sad, dark depths of thought, but he had a daring courage equal to Raleigh's, without Raleigh's cynical contempt for mercy and honour. He had every personal advantage requisite for a time when intellect and ready wit, and high-tempered valour, and personal beauty, and skill in affairs, with equal skill in amusements, were expected to go together in the accomplished courtier. And Essex was a man not merely to be courted and admired, to shine and dazzle, but to be loved. Elizabeth, with her strange and perverse emotional constitution, loved him, if she ever loved any one. Every one who served him loved him : and he was as much as any one could be in those days, a popular favourite. Under better fortune he might have risen to a great height of character : in Elizabeth's Court he was fated to be ruined.

For in that Court all the qualities in him which needed control received daily stimulus, and his ardour and high-aiming temper turned into impatience and restless irritability. He had a mistress who was at one time in the humour to be treated as a tender woman, at another as an outrageous flirt, at another as the haughtiest and most imperious of queens : her mood varied, no one could tell how, and it was most dangerous to mistake it. It was part of her pleasure to find in her favourite a spirit as high, a humour as contradictory and determined, as her own : it was the charming contrast to the obsequi-

ousness or the prudence of the rest ; but no one could be sure at what unlooked-for moment, and how fiercely, she might resent in earnest a display of what she had herself encouraged. Essex was ruined for all real greatness by having to suit himself to this bewildering and most unwholesome and degrading waywardness. She taught him to think himself irresistible in opinion and in claims : she amused herself in teaching him how completely he was mistaken. Alternately spoiled and crossed, he learned to be exacting, unreasonable, absurd in his pettish resentments or brooding sullenness. He learned to think that she must be dealt with by the same methods which she herself employed. The effect was not produced in a moment ; it was the result of a courtiership of sixteen years. But it ended in corrupting a noble nature. Essex came to believe that she who cowed others must be frightened herself : that the stinging injustice which led a proud man to expect, only to see how he would behave when refused, deserved to be brought to reason by a counter-buffet as rough as her own insolent caprice. He drifted into discontent, into disaffection, into neglect of duty, into questionable schemings for the future of a reign that must shortly end, into criminal methods of guarding himself, of humbling his rivals and regaining influence. A "fatal impatience," as Bacon calls it, gave his rivals an advantage which, perhaps in self-defence, they could not fail to take ; and that career, so brilliant, so full of promise of good, ended in misery, in dishonour, in remorse, on the scaffold of the Tower.

With this attractive and powerful person Bacon's fortunes, in the last years of the century, became more

and more knit up. Bacon was now past thirty, Essex a few years younger. In spite of Bacon's apparent advantage and interest at Court, in spite of abilities, which, though his genius was not yet known, his contemporaries clearly recognised, he was still a struggling and unsuccessful man : ambitious to rise, for no unworthy reasons, but needy, in weak health, with careless and expensive habits, and embarrassed with debt. He had hoped to rise by the favour of the Queen, and for the sake of his father. For some ill-explained reason he was to the last disappointed. Though she used him "for matters of state and revenue," she either did not like him, or did not see in him the servant she wanted to advance. He went on to the last pressing his uncle, Lord Burghley : he applied in the humblest terms, he made himself useful with his pen, he got his mother to write for him ; but Lord Burghley, probably because he thought his nephew more of a man of letters, than a sound lawyer and practical public servant, did not care to bring him forward. From his cousin, Robert Cecil, Bacon received polite words and friendly assurances ; Cecil may have undervalued him, or have been jealous of him, or suspected him as a friend of Essex : he certainly gave Bacon good reason to think that his words meant nothing. Except Essex, and perhaps his brother Antony—the most affectionate and devoted of brothers—no one had yet recognised all that Bacon was. Meanwhile time was passing. The vastness, the difficulties, the attractions of that conquest of all knowledge which he dreamed of, were becoming greater every day to his thoughts. The law, without which he could not live, took up time and brought in little. Attendance on the Court was ex-

pensive, yet indispensable, if he wished for place. His mother was never very friendly, and thought him absurd and extravagant. Debts increased and creditors grumbled. The outlook was discouraging, when his friendship with Essex opened to him a more hopeful prospect.

In the year 1593 the Attorney-General's place was vacant, and Essex, who in that year became a Privy Councillor, determined that Bacon should be Attorney-General. Bacon's reputation as a lawyer was overshadowed by his philosophical and literary pursuits. He was thought young for the office, and he had not yet served in any subordinate place. And there was another man, who was supposed to carry all English law in his head, full of rude force and endless precedents, hard of heart, and voluble of tongue, who also wanted it. An Attorney-General was one who would bring all the resources and hidden subtleties of English law to the service of the Crown, and use them with thorough-going and unflinching resolution against those whom the Crown accused of treason, sedition, or invasion of the prerogative. It is no wonder that the Cecils, and the Queen herself, thought Coke likely to be a more useful public servant than Bacon: it is certain what Coke himself thought about it, and what his estimate was of the man whom Essex was pushing against him. But Essex did not take up his friend's cause in the lukewarm fashion in which Burghley had patronised his nephew. There was nothing that Essex pursued with greater pertinacity. He importuned the Queen. He risked without scruple offending her. She apparently long shrank from directly refusing his request. The Cecils were for Coke—the



"*Huddler*," as Bacon calls him, in a letter to Essex ; but the appointment was delayed. All through 1593, and until April 1594, the struggle went on.

When Robert Cecil suggested that Essex should be content with the Solicitor's place for Bacon, "praying him to be well advised, for if his Lordship had spoken of that it might have been of easier digestion to the Queen," he turned round on Cecil—

"Digest me no digesting (said the Earl) ; for the Attorneyship is that I must have for Francis Bacon ; and in that I will spend my uttermost credit, friendship, and authority against whomsoever, and that whosoever went about to procure it to others, that it should cost both the mediators and the suitors the setting on before they came by it. And this be you assured of, Sir Robert, quoth the Earl, for now do I fully declare myself ; and for your own part, Sir Robert, I do think much and strange both of my Lord your father and you, that can have the mind to seek the preferment of a stranger before so near a kinsman ; namely, considering if you weigh in a balance his parts and sufficiency in any respect with those of his competitor, excepting only four poor years of admittance, which Francis Bacon hath more than recompensed with the priority of his reading, in all other respects you shall find no comparison between them."

But the Queen's disgust at some very slight show of independence on Bacon's part in Parliament, unforgiven in spite of repeated apologies, together with the influence of the Cecils and the pressure of so formidable and so useful a man as Coke, turned the scale against Essex. In April 1594, Coke was made Attorney. Coke did not forget the pretender to law, as he would think him, who had dared so long to dispute his claims ; and Bacon was deeply wounded. "No man," he thought, "had ever received a more exquisite disgrace," and he spoke



of retiring to Cambridge "to spend the rest of his life in his studies and contemplations." But Essex was not discouraged. He next pressed eagerly for the Solicitorship. Again, after much waiting he was foiled. An inferior man was put over Bacon's head. Bacon found that Essex, who could do most things, for some reason could not do this. He himself, too, had pressed his suit with the greatest importunity on the Queen, on Burghley, on Cecil, on every one who could help him; he reminded the Queen how many years ago it was since he first kissed her hand in her service, and ever since had used his wits to please; but it was all in vain. For once he lost patience. He was angry with Essex; the Queen's anger with Essex had, he thought, recoiled on his friend. He was angry with the Queen; she held his long waiting cheap; she played with him and amused herself with delay; he would go abroad, and he "knew her Majesty's nature, that she neither careth though the whole surname of the Bacons travelled, nor of the Cecils neither." He was very angry with Robert Cecil; affecting not to believe them, he tells him stories he has heard of his corrupt and underhand dealing. He writes almost a farewell letter of ceremonious but ambiguous thanks to Lord Burghley, hoping that he would impute any offence that Bacon might have given to the "complexion of a suitor and a tired sea-sick suitor," and speaking despairingly of his future success in the law. The humiliations of what a suitor has to go through torment him: "It is my luck," he writes to Cecil, "still to be akin to such things as I neither like in nature nor would willingly meet with in my course, but yet cannot avoid without show of base timorousness or else of unkind or suspicious

strangeness." And to his friend Fulke Greville, he thus unburdens himself :—

"SIR—I understand of your pains to have visited me, for which I thank you. My matter is an endless question. I assure you I had said *Requiesce anima mea* ; but I now am otherwise put to my psalter ; *Nolite confidere*. I dare go no further. Her Majesty had by set speech more than once assured me of her intention to call me to her service, which I could not understand but of the place I had been named to. And now whether *invidus homo hoc fecit* ; or whether my matter must be an appendix to my Lord of Essex suit ; or whether her Majesty, pretending to prove my ability, meaneth but to take advantage of some errors which, like enough, at one time or other I may commit ; or what is it ; but her Majesty is not ready to despatch it. And what though the Master of the Rolls, and my Lord of Essex, and yourself, and others, think my case without doubt, yet in the meantime I have a hard condition, to stand so that whatsoever service I do to her Majesty, it shall be thought to be but *servitium viscatum*, lime-twigs and fetches to place myself ; and so I shall have envy, not thanks. This is a course to quench all good spirits, and to corrupt every man's nature ; which will, I fear, much hurt her Majesty's service in the end. I have been like a piece of stuff bespoken in the shop ; and if her Majesty will not take me, it may be the selling by parcels will be more gainful. For to be, as I told you, like a child following a bird, which when he is nearest flieth away and lighteth a little before, and then the child after it again, and so *in infinitum*, I am weary of it ; as also of wearying my good friends : of whom, nevertheless, I hope in one course or other gratefully to deserve. And so, not forgetting your business, I leave to trouble you with this idle letter ; being but *justa et moderata querimonia* ; for indeed I do confess, *primus amor* will not easily be cast off. And thus again I commend me to you."

After one more effort the chase was given up, at least for the moment ; for it was soon resumed. But just now Bacon felt that all the world was against him. He would retire "out of the sunshine into the shade." One

friend only encouraged him. He did more. He helped him when Bacon most wanted help, in his straightened and embarrassed "estate." Essex, when he could do nothing more, gave Bacon an estate worth at least £1800. Bacon's resolution is recorded in the following letter :—

"IT MAY PLEASE YOUR GOOD LORDSHIP—I pray God her Majesty's weighing be not like the weight of a balance ; *gravia deorsum levia sursum*. But I am as far from being altered in devotion towards her, as I am from distrust that she will be altered in opinion towards me, when she knoweth me better. For myself, I have lost some opinion, some time, and some means ; this is my account ; but then for opinion, it is a blast that goeth and cometh ; for time, it is true it goeth and cometh not ; but yet I have learned that it may be redeemed. For means, I value that most ; and the rather, *because I am purposed not to follow the practice of the law (if her Majesty command me in any particular, I shall be ready to do her willing service)* ; and my reason is only, *because it drinketh too much time, which I have dedicated to better purposes*. But even for that point of estate and means, I partly lean to Thales' opinion, That a philosopher may be rich if he will. Thus your Lordship seeth how I comfort myself ; to the increase whereof I would fain please myself to believe that to be true which my Lord Treasurer writeth ; which is, that it is more than a philosopher morally can digest. But without any such high conceit, I esteem it like the pulling out of an aching tooth, which, I remember, when I was a child, and had little philosophy, I was glad of when it was done. For your Lordship, I do think myself more beholding to you than to any man. And I say, I reckon myself as a *common* (not popular but *common*) ; and as much as is lawful to be enclosed of a common, so much your Lordship shall be sure to have.—Your Lordship's to obey your honourable commands, more settled than ever."

It may be that, as Bacon afterwards maintained, the closing sentences of this letter implied a significant reserve of his devotion. But during the brilliant and stormy years of Essex's career which followed, Bacon's

relations to him continued unaltered. Essex pressed Bacon's claims whenever a chance offered. He did his best to get Bacon a rich wife—the young widow of Sir Christopher Hatton—but in vain. Instead of Bacon she accepted Coke, and became famous afterwards in the great family quarrel, in which Coke and Bacon again found themselves face to face, and which nearly ruined Bacon before the time. Bacon worked for Essex when he was wanted, and gave the advice which a shrewd and cautious friend would give to a man who, by his success and increasing pride and self-confidence, was running into serious dangers, arming against himself deadly foes, and exposing himself to the chances of fortune. Bacon was nervous about Essex's capacity for war, a capacity which perhaps was not proved, even by the most brilliant exploit of the time, the capture of Cadiz, in which Essex foreshadowed the heroic but well-calculated audacities of Nelson and Cochrane, and showed himself as little able as they to bear the intoxication of success, and to work in concert with envious and unfriendly associates. At the end of the year 1596, the year in which Essex had won such reputation at Cadiz, Bacon wrote him a letter of advice and remonstrance. It is a lively picture of the defects and dangers of Essex's behaviour as the Queen's favourite; and it is a most characteristic and worldly-wise summary of the ways which Bacon would have him take, to cure the one and escape the other. Bacon had, as he says, "good reason to think that the Earl's fortune comprehended his own." And the letter may perhaps be taken as an indirect warning to Essex that Bacon must, at any rate, take care of his own fortune, if the Earl persisted in dangerous courses.



Bacon shows how he is to remove the impressions, strong in the Queen's mind, of Essex's defects; how he is, by due submissions and stratagems, to catch her humour:

"But whether I counsel you the best, or for the best, duty bindeth me to offer to you my wishes. I said to your Lordship last time, *Martha, Martha, attendis ad plurima, unum sufficit*; win the Queen: if this be not the beginning, of any other course I see no end."

Bacon gives a series of minute directions how Essex is to disarm the Queen's suspicions, and to neutralise the advantage which his rivals take of them; how he is to remove "the opinion of his nature being *opiniastre* and not rulable;" how, avoiding the faults of Leicester and Hatton, he is, as far as he can, to "allege them for authors and patterns." Especially, he must give up that show of soldier-like distinction, which the Queen so disliked, and take some quiet post at Court. He must not alarm the Queen by seeking popularity; he must take care of his estate; he must get rid of some of his officers; and he must not be disquieted by other favourites.

Bacon wished, as he said afterwards, to see him "with a white staff in his hand, as my Lord of Leicester had," an honour and ornament to the Court in the eyes of the people and foreign ambassadors. But Essex was not fit for the part which Bacon urged upon him, that of an obsequious and vigilant observer of the Queen's moods and humours. As time went on, things became more and more difficult between him and his strange mistress: and there were never wanting men who, like Cecil and Raleigh, for good and bad reasons, feared and hated Essex, and who had the craft and the skill to



make the most of his inexcusable errors. At last he allowed himself, from ambition, from the spirit of contradiction, from the blind passion for doing what he thought would show defiance to his enemies, to be tempted into the Irish campaign of 1599. Bacon at a later time claimed credit for having foreseen and foretold its issue. "I did as plainly see his overthrow, chained as it were by destiny to that journey, as it is possible for any man to ground a judgment on future contingents." He warned Essex, so he thought in after years, of the difficulty of the work; he warned him that he would leave the Queen in the hands of his enemies: "It would be ill for her, ill for him, ill for the State." "I am sure," he adds, "I never in anything in my life dealt with him in like earnestness by speech, by writing, and by all the means I could devise." But Bacon's memory was mistaken. We have his letters. When Essex went to Ireland, Bacon wrote only in the language of sanguine hope: so little did he see "overthrow chained by destiny to that journey," that "some good spirit led his pen to presage to his Lordship success:" he saw in the enterprise a great occasion of honour to his friend: he gave prudent counsels, but he looked forward confidently to Essex being as "fatal a captain to that war, as Africanus was to the war of Carthage." Indeed, however anxious he may have been, he could not have foreseen Essex's unaccountable and to this day unintelligible failure. But failure was the end, from whatever cause; failure, disgraceful and complete. Then followed wild and guilty but abortive projects for retrieving his failure, by using his power in Ireland to make himself formidable to his enemies at Court, and

even to the Queen herself. He intrigued with Tyrone : he intrigued with James of Scotland : he plunged into a whirl of angry and baseless projects, which came to nothing the moment they were discussed. How empty and idle they were was shown by his return against orders to tell his own story at Nonsuch, and by thus placing himself alone and undeniably in the wrong, in the power of the hostile Council. Of course it was not to be thought of that Cecil should not use his advantage in the game. It was too early, irritated though the Queen was, to strike the final blow. But it is impossible not to see, looking back over the miserable history, that Essex was treated in a way which was certain, sooner or later, to make him, being what he was, plunge into a fatal and irretrievable mistake. He was treated as a cat treats a mouse : he was worried, confined, disgraced, publicly reprimanded, brought just within verge of the charge of treason, but not quite, just enough to discredit and alarm him, but to leave him still a certain amount of play. He was made to see that the Queen's favour was not quite hopeless ; but that nothing but the most absolute and unreserved humiliation could recover it. It was plain to any one who knew Essex that this treatment would drive Essex to madness. "These same gradations of yours"—so Bacon represents himself expostulating with the Queen on her caprices—"are fitter to corrupt than to correct any mind of greatness." They made Essex desperate ; he became frightened for his life, and he had reason to be so, though not in the way which he feared. At length came the stupid and ridiculous outbreak of the 8th of February  $\frac{1600}{1601}$ , a plot to seize the palace and raise the city against the

ministers, by the help of a few gentlemen armed only with their rapiers. As Bacon himself told the Queen, "if some base and cruel-minded persons had entered into such an action, it might have caused much blow and combustion; but it appeared well that they were such as knew not how to play the malefactors!" But it was sufficient to bring Essex within the doom of treason.

Essex knew well what the stake was. He lost it, and deserved to lose it, little as his enemies deserved to win it; for they, too, were doing what would have cost them their heads if Elizabeth had known it,—corresponding, as Essex was accused of doing, with Scotland about the succession, and possibly with Spain. But they were playing cautiously and craftily; he with bungling passion. He had been so long accustomed to power and place, that he could not endure that rivals should keep him out of it. They were content to have their own way, while affecting to be the humblest of servants: he would be nothing less than a Mayor of the Palace. He was guilty of a great public crime, as every man is who appeals to arms for anything short of the most sacred cause. He was bringing into England, which had settled down into peaceable ways, an imitation of the violent methods of France and the Guises. But the crime as well as the penalty belonged to the age, and crimes legally said to be against the State mean morally very different things according to the state of society and opinion. It is an unfairness verging on the ridiculous, when the ground is elaborately laid for keeping up the impression that Essex was preparing a real treason against the Queen like that of Norfolk. It was a treason

of the same sort and order as that for which Northumberland sent Somerset to the block : the treason of being an unsuccessful rival.

Meanwhile Bacon had been getting gradually into the unofficial employ of the Government. He had become one of the "Learned Counsel," lawyers with subordinate and intermittent work, used when wanted, but without patent or salary, and not ranking with the regular law officers. The Government had found him useful in affairs of the revenue, in framing interrogatories for prisoners in the Tower, in drawing up reports of plots against the Queen. He did not in this way earn enough to support himself ; but he had thus come to have some degree of access to the Queen, which he represents as being familiar and confidential, though he still perceived, as he says himself, that she did not like him. At the first news of Essex's return to England, Bacon greeted him :—

"MY LORD—Conceiving that your Lordship came now up in the person of a good servant to see your sovereign mistress, which kind of compliments are many times *instar magnorum meritorum*, and therefore it would be hard for me to find you, I have committed to this poor paper the humble salutations of him *that is more yours than any man's, and more yours than any man*. To these salutations I add a due and joyful gratulation, confessing that your Lordship, in your last conference with me before your journey, spake not in vain, God making it good, That you trusted we should say *Quis putasset* ! Which as it is found true in a happy sense, so I wish you do not find another *Quis putasset* in the manner of taking this so great a service. But I hope it is, as he said, *Nubecula est, cito transibit*, and that your Lordship's wisdom and obsequious circumspection and patience will turn all to the best. So referring all to some time that I may attend you, I commit you to God's best preservation."



But when Essex's conduct in Ireland had to be dealt with, Bacon's services were called for ; and from this time his relations towards Essex were altered. Every one, no one better than the Queen herself, knew all that he owed to Essex. It is strangely illustrative of the time, that especially as Bacon held so subordinate a position, he should have been required, and should have been trusted, to act against his only and most generous benefactor. It is strange, too, that however great his loyalty to the Queen, however much and sincerely he might condemn his friend's conduct, he should think it possible to accept the task. He says that he made some remonstrance ; and he says, no doubt truly, that during the first stage of the business he used the ambiguous position in which he was placed to soften Essex's inevitable punishment, and to bring about a reconciliation between him and the Queen. But he was required, as the Queen's lawyer, to set forth in public Essex's offences ; and he admits that he did so "not over tenderly." Yet all this, even if we have misgivings about it, is intelligible. If he had declined, he could not, perhaps, have done the service which he assures us that he tried to do to Essex ; and it is certain that he would have had to reckon with the terrible lady who in her old age still ruled England from the throne of Henry VIII., and who had certainly no great love for Bacon himself. She had already shown him in a much smaller matter what was the forfeit to be paid for any resistance to her will. All the hopes of his life must perish ; all the grudging and suspicious favours which he had won with such unremitting toil and patient waiting would be sacrificed, and he would henceforth live under the wrath of those who never forgave. And whatever he



did for himself, he believed that he was serving Essex. His scheming imagination and his indefatigable pen were at work. He tried strange indirect methods; he invented a correspondence between his brother and Essex, which was to fall into the Queen's hands in order to soften her wrath and show her Essex's most secret feelings. When the Queen proposed to dine with him at his lodge in Twickenham Park, "though I profess not to be a poet," he "prepared a sonnet tending and alluding to draw on her Majesty's reconciliation to my Lord." It was an awkward thing for one who had been so intimate with Essex to be so deep in the counsels of those who hated him. He complains that many people thought him ungrateful and disloyal to his friend, and that stories circulated to his disadvantage, as if he were poisoning the Queen's ear against Essex. But he might argue fairly enough that, wilful and wrong-headed as Essex had been, it was the best that he could now do for him; and as long as it was only a question of Essex's disgrace and enforced absence from Court, Bacon could not be bound to give up the prospects of his life, indeed, his public duty as a subordinate servant of government, on account of his friend's inexcusable and dangerous follies. Essex did not see it so, and in the subjoined correspondence had the advantage; but Bacon's position, though a higher one might be imagined, where men had been such friends as these two men had been, is quite a defensible one:—

"MY LORD—No man can better expound my doings than your Lordship, which maketh me need to say the less. Only I humbly pray you to believe that I aspire to the conscience and commendation first of *bonus civis*, which with us is a good and true servant to the Queen, and next of *bonus vir*, that is an honest man. I desire your

Lordship also to think that though I confess I love some things much better than I love your Lordship, as the Queen's service, her quiet and contentment, her honour, her favour, the good of my country, and the like, yet I love few persons better than yourself, both for gratitude's sake and for your own virtues, which cannot hurt but by accident or abuse. Of which my good affection I was ever ready and am ready to yield testimony by any good offices, but with such reservations as yourself cannot but allow : for as I was ever sorry that your Lordship should fly with waxen wings, doubting Icarus' fortune, so for the growing up of your own feathers, specially ostrich's, or any other save of a bird of prey, no man shall be more glad. And this is the axletree whereupon I have turned and shall turn, which to signify to you, though I think you are of yourself persuaded as much, is the cause of my writing ; and so I commend your Lordship to God's goodness. From Gray's Inn, this 20th day of July, 1600.

“ Your Lordship's most humbly,

“ FR. BACON.”

To this letter Essex returned an answer of dignified reserve, such as Bacon might himself have dictated.

“ MR. BACON—I can neither expound nor censure your late actions : being ignorant of all of them, save one ; and having directed my sight inward only, to examine myself. You do pray me to believe that you only aspire to the conscience and commendation of *bonus civis* and *bonus vir* ; and I do faithfully assure you, that while that is your ambition (though your course be active and mine contemplative), yet we shall both *convenire in eodem tertio* and *convenire inter nosipos*. Your profession of affection and offer of good offices are welcome to me. For answer to them I will say but this, that you have believed I have been kind to you, and you may believe that I cannot be other, either upon humour or my own election. I am a stranger to all poetical conceits, or else I should say somewhat of your poetical example. But this I must say, that I never flew with other wings than desire to merit and confidence in my Sovereign's favour ; and when one of these wings failed me I would light nowhere but at my Sovereign's feet, though she suffered me to be bruised with my fall. And till her Majesty, that knows I was never bird of prey, finds it to agree with her will and her

service that my wings should be impeded again, I have committed myself to the mire. No power but my God's and my Sovereign's can alter this resolution of

“Your retired friend,

“ESSEX.”

But after Essex's mad attempt in the city a new state of things arose. The inevitable result was a trial for high treason, a trial of which no one could doubt the purpose and end. The examination of accomplices revealed speeches, proposals, projects, not very intelligible to us in the still imperfectly understood game of intrigue that was going on among all parties at the end of Elizabeth's reign, but quite enough to place Essex at the mercy of the Government and the offended Queen. “The new information,” says Mr. Spedding, “had been immediately communicated to Coke and Bacon.” Coke, as Attorney-General, of course conducted the prosecution; and the next prominent person on the side of the Crown was not the Solicitor, or any other regular law officer, but Bacon, though holding the very subordinate place of one of the “Learned Counsel.”

It does not appear that he thought it strange, that he showed any pain or reluctance, that he sought to be excused. He took it as a matter of course. The part assigned to Bacon in the prosecution was as important as that of Coke: and he played it more skilfully and effectively. Trials in those days were confused affairs, often passing into a mere wrangle between the judges, lawyers, and lookers-on, and the prisoner at the bar. It was so in this case. Coke is said to have blundered in his way of presenting the evidence, and to have been led away from the point into an altercation with Essex. Probably

it really did not much matter : but the trial was getting out of its course and inclining in favour of the prisoner, till Bacon—Mr. Spedding thinks, out of his regular turn—stepped forward and retrieved matters. This is Mr. Spedding's account of what Bacon said and did:—

“ By this time the argument had drifted so far away from the point that it must have been difficult for a listener to remember what it was that the prisoners were charged with, or how much of the charge had been proved. And Coke, who was all this time the sole speaker on behalf of the Crown, was still following each fresh topic that rose before him, without the sign of an intention or the intimation of a wish to return to the main question and reform the broken ranks of his evidence. Luckily he seems to have been now at a loss what point to take next, and the pause gave Bacon an opportunity of rising. It can hardly have been in pursuance of previous arrangements ; for though it was customary in those days to distribute the evidence into parts and to assign several parts to several counsel, there had been no appearance as yet of any part being concluded. It is probable that the course of the trial had upset previous arrangements and confused the parts. At any rate so it was, however it came to pass, that when Cecil and Essex had at last finished their expostulation and parted with charitable prayers, each that the other might be forgiven, then (says our reporter) Mr. Bacon entered into a speech much after this fashion :—

“ In speaking of this late and horrible rebellion which hath been in the eyes and ears of all men, I shall save myself much labour in opening and enforcing the points thereof, insomuch as I speak not before a country jury of ignorant men, but before a most honourable assembly of the greatest Peers of the land, whose wisdoms conceive far more than my tongue can utter ; yet with your gracious and honourable favours I will presume, if not for information of your Honours, yet for the discharge of my duty, to say thus much. No man can be ignorant, that knows matters of former ages, and all history makes it plain, that there was never any traitor heard of that durst directly attempt the seat of his liege prince but he always coloured his practices with some plausible pretence. For God hath imprinted such a majesty in the face of a prince that no



private man dare approach the person of his sovereign with a traitorous intent. And therefore they run another side course, *oblique et à latere*: some to reform corruptions of the State and religion; some to reduce the ancient liberties and customs pretended to be lost and worn out; some to remove those persons that being in high places make themselves subject to envy; but all of them aim at the overthrow of the State and destruction of the present rulers. And this likewise is the use of those that work mischief of another quality; as Cain, that first murderer, took up an excuse for his fact, shaming to outface it with impudency, thus the Earl made his colour the severing some great men and councillors from her Majesty's favour, and the fear he stood in of his pretended enemies lest they should murder him in his house. Therefore he saith he was compelled to fly into the City for succour and assistance; not much unlike Pisistratus, of whom it was so anciently written how he gashed and wounded himself, and in that sort ran crying into Athens that his life was sought and like to have been taken away; thinking to have moved the people to have pitied him and taken his part by such counterfeited harm and danger; whereas his aim and drift was to take the government of the city into his hands and alter the form thereof. With like pretences of dangers and assaults the Earl of Essex entered the City of London and passed through the bowels thereof, blanching rumours that he should have been murdered and that the State was sold; whereas he had no such enemies, no such dangers: persuading themselves that if they could prevail all would have done well. But now *magna scelera terminantur in hæresin*: for you, my Lord, should know that though princes give their subjects cause of discontent, though they take away the honours they have heaped upon them, though they bring them to a lower estate than they raised them from, yet ought they not to be so forgetful of their allegiance that they should enter into any undutiful act; much less upon rebellion, as you, my Lord, have done. All whatsoever you have or can say in answer hereof are but shadows. And therefore methinks it were best for you to confess, not to justify.' "

Essex was provoked by Bacon's incredulous sneer about enemies and dangers—"I call forth Mr. Bacon against Mr. Bacon," and referred to the letters which



Bacon had written in his name, and in which these dangerous enmities were taken for granted. Bacon, in answer, repeated what he said so often—"That he had spent more time in vain in studying how to make the Earl a good servant to the Queen and State, than he had done in anything else." Once more Coke got the proceedings into a tangle, and once more Bacon came forward to repair the miscarriage of his leader.

" 'I have never yet seen in any case such favour shown to any prisoner ; so many digressions, such delivering of evidence by fractions, and so silly a defence of such great and notorious treasons. May it please your Grace, you have seen how weakly he hath shadowed his purpose and how slenderly he hath answered the objections against him. But, my Lord, I doubt the variety of matters and the many digressions may minister occasion of forgetfulness, and may have severed the judgments of the Lords ; and therefore I hold it necessary briefly to recite the Judges' opinions.'

"That being done, he proceeded to this effect:—

" 'Now put the case that the Earl of Essex's intents were, as he would have it believed, to go only as a suppliant to her Majesty. Shall their petitions be presented by armed petitioners ? This must needs bring loss of property to the prince. Neither is it any point of law, as my Lord of Southampton would have it believed, that condemns them of treason. To take secret counsel, to execute it, to run together in numbers armed with weapons,—what can be the excuse ? Warned by the Lord Keeper, by a herald, and yet persist ! Will any simple man take this to be less than treason ?'

"The Earl of Essex answered that if he had purposed anything against others than those his private enemies, he would not have stirred with so slender a company. Whereunto Mr. Bacon answered:—

" 'It was not the company you carried with you but the assistance you hoped for in the City which you trusted unto. The Duke of Guise thrust himself into the streets of Paris on the day of the Barricados in his doublet and hose, attended only with eight gentlemen, and found that help in the city which (thanks be to God) you failed of here. And what followed ? The King was forced to put him-

self into a pilgrim's weeds, and in that disguise to steal away to scape their fury. Even such was my Lord's confidence too, and his pretence the same—an all-hail and a kiss to the City. But the end was treason, as hath been sufficiently proved. But when he had once delivered and engaged himself so far into that which the shallowness of his conceit could not accomplish as he expected, the Queen for her defence taking arms against him, he was glad to yield himself; and thinking to colour his practices, turned his pretexts, and alleged the occasion thereof to proceed from a private quarrel.'

"To this" (adds the reporter) "the Earl answered little. Nor was anything said afterwards by either of the prisoners, either in the thrust-and-parry dialogue with Coke that followed, or when they spoke at large to the question why judgment should not be pronounced, which at all altered the complexion of the case. They were both found guilty and sentence passed in the usual form."

Bacon's legal position was so subordinate a place that there must have been a special reason for his employment. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, on the part of the Government, Bacon was thus used for the very reason that he had been the friend of Essex. He was not commonly called upon in such prosecutions. He was not employed by Cecil in the Winchester trials of Raleigh, Grey, and Cobham, three years afterwards, nor in those connected with the Gunpowder Plot. He was called upon now because no one could so much damage Essex; and this last proof of his ready service was required by those whose favour, since Essex had gone hopelessly wrong, he had been diligently seeking. And Bacon acquiesced in the demand, apparently without surprise. No record remains to show that he felt any difficulty in playing his part. He had persuaded himself that his public duty, his duty as a good citizen to the Queen and the commonwealth, demanded of him that he should obey the call to do his best to bring a traitor to punishment.

Public duty has claims on a man as well as friendship, and in many conceivable cases, claims paramount to those of friendship. And yet friendship, too, has claims, at least on a man's memory. Essex had been a dear friend, if words could mean anything. He had done more than any man had done for Bacon, generously and nobly, and Bacon had acknowledged it in the amplest terms. Only a year before he had written, "I am as much yours as any man's, and as much yours as any man." It is not, and it was not, a question of Essex's guilt. It may be a question whether the whole matter was not exaggerated as to its purpose, as it certainly was as to its real danger and mischief. We at least know that his rivals dabbled in intrigue and foolish speeches as well as he; that little more than two years afterwards Raleigh and Grey and Cobham were condemned for treason in much the same fashion as he was; that Cecil to the end of his days—with whatever purpose—was a pensioner of Spain. The question was not whether Essex was guilty. The question for Bacon was, whether it was becoming in him, having been what he had been to Essex, to take a leading part in proceedings which were to end in his ruin and death. He was not a judge. He was not a regular law officer like Coke. His only employment had been casual and occasional. He might, most naturally, on the score of his old friendship, have asked to be excused. Condemning, as he did, his friend's guilt and folly, he might have refused to take part in a cause of blood, in which his best friend must perish. He might honestly have given up Essex as incorrigible, and have retired to stand apart in sorrow and silence while the inevitable tragedy was played out. The only answer to this

is, that to have declined would have incurred the Queen's displeasure: he would have forfeited any chance of advancement; nay, closely connected as he had been with Essex, he might have been involved in his friend's ruin. But inferior men have marred their fortunes by standing by their friends in not undeserved trouble, and no one knew better than Bacon what was worthy and noble in human action. The choice lay before him. He seems hardly to have gone through any struggle. He persuaded himself that he could not help himself, under the constraint of his duty to the Queen: and he did his best to get Essex condemned.

And this was not all. The death of Essex was a shock to the popularity of Elizabeth greater than anything that had happened in her long reign. Bacon's name also had come into men's mouths as that of a time-server, who played fast and loose with Essex and his enemies, and who, when he had got what he could from Essex, turned to see what he could get from those who put him to death. A justification of the whole affair was felt to be necessary; and Bacon was fixed upon for the distinction and the dishonour of doing it. No one could tell the story so well, and it was felt that he would not shrink from it. Nor did he. In cold blood he sat down to blacken Essex, using his intimate personal knowledge of the past to strengthen his statements against a friend who was in his grave, and for whom none could answer but Bacon himself. It is a well-compacted and forcible account of Essex's misdoings, on which of course the colour of deliberate and dangerous treason was placed. Much of it, no doubt, was true; but even of the facts, and much more of the colour, there



was no check to be had, and it is certain that it was an object to the Government to make out the worst. It is characteristic that Bacon records that he did not lose sight of the claims of courtesy, and studiously spoke of "my Lord of Essex" in the draft submitted for correction to the Queen; but she was more unceremonious, and insisted that the "rebel" should be spoken of simply as "Essex."

After a business of this kind, fines and forfeitures flowed in abundantly, and were "usually bestowed on deserving servants or favoured suitors by way of reward;" and Bacon came in for his share. Out of one of the fines he received £1200. "The Queen hath done something for me," he writes to a friendly creditor, "though not in the proportion I had hoped," and he afterwards asked for something more. It was rather under the value of Essex's gift to him in 1594. But she still refused him all promotion. He was without an official place in the Queen's service, and he never was allowed to have it. It is clear that the "Declaration of the Treason of the Earl of Essex," if it justified the Government, did not remove the odium which had fallen on Bacon. Mr. Spedding says that he can find no signs of it. The proof of it is found in the "Apology" which Bacon found it expedient to write after Elizabeth's death and early in James's reign. He found that the recollection of the way in which he had dealt with his friend hung heavy upon him: men hesitated to trust him in spite of his now recognised ability. Accordingly, he drew up an apology, which he addressed to Lord Mountjoy, the friend, in reality half the accomplice, of Essex, in his wild, ill-defined plan for putting pressure



on Elizabeth. It is a clear, able, of course *ex parte* statement of the doings of the three chief actors, two of whom could no longer answer for themselves, or correct and contradict the third. It represents the Queen as implacable and cruel, Essex as incorrigibly and outrageously wilful, proud, and undutiful, Bacon himself as using every effort and device to appease the Queen's anger and suspiciousness, and to bring Essex to a wiser and humbler mind. The picture is indeed a vivid one, and full of dramatic force, of an unrelenting and merciless mistress bent on breaking and bowing down to the dust the haughty spirit of a once-loved but rebellious favourite, whom, though he has deeply offended, she yet wishes to bring once more under her yoke; and of the calm, keen-witted looker-on, watching the dangerous game, not without personal interest, but with undisturbed presence of mind, and doing his best to avert an irreparable and fatal breach. How far he honestly did his best for his misguided friend we can only know from his own report; but there is no reason to think that he did Essex ill service, though he notices in passing an allegation that the Queen in one of her angry fits had charged him with this. But his interest clearly was to make up the quarrel between the Queen and Essex. Bacon would have been a greater man with both of them if he had been able to do so. He had been too deeply in Essex's intimacy to make his new position of mediator, with a strong bias on the Queen's side, quite safe and easy for a man of honourable mind; but a cool-judging and prudent man may well have acted as he represents himself acting without forgetting what he owed to his friend. Till the last great moment

of trial there is a good deal to be said for Bacon : a man keenly alive to Essex's faults, with a strong sense of what he owed to the Queen and the State, and with his own reasonable chances of rising greatly prejudiced by Essex's folly. But at length came the crisis which showed the man, and threw light on all that had passed before, when he was picked out, out of his regular place, to be charged with the task of bringing home the capital charge against Essex. He does not say he hesitated. He does not say that he asked to be excused the terrible office. He did not flinch as the minister of vengeance for those who required that Essex should die. He did his work, we are told by his admiring biographer, better than Coke, and repaired the blunders of the prosecution. He passes over very shortly this part of the business : "it was laid upon me with the rest of my fellows ;" yet it is the knot and key of the whole, as far as his own character is concerned. Bacon had his public duty : his public duty may have compelled him to stand apart from Essex. But it was his interest, it was no part of his public duty, which required him to accept the task of accuser of his friend, and in his friend's direst need calmly to drive home a well-directed stroke that should extinguish chances and hopes, and make his ruin certain. No one who reads his anxious letters about preferment and the Queen's favour, about his disappointed hopes, about his straitened means and distress for money, about his difficulties with his creditors—he was twice arrested for debt—can doubt that the question was between his own prospects and his friend ; and that to his own interest he sacrificed his friend and his own honour.

## CHAPTER III.

### BACON AND JAMES I.

BACON's life was a double one. There was the life of high thinking, of disinterested aims, of genuine enthusiasm, of genuine desire to delight and benefit mankind, by opening new paths to wonder and knowledge and power. And there was the put on and worldly life, the life of supposed necessities for the provision of daily bread, the life of ambition and self-seeking, which he followed, not without interest and satisfaction, but at bottom because he thought he must—must be a great man, must be rich, must live in the favour of the great, because without it his great designs could not be accomplished. His original plan of life was disclosed in his letter to Lord Burghley: to get some office with an assured income and not much work, and then to devote the best of his time to his own subjects. But this, if it was really his plan, was gradually changed: first, because he could not get such a place; and next because his connection with Essex, the efforts to gain him the Attorney's place, and the use which the Queen made of him after Essex could do no more for him, drew him more and more into public work, and specially the career of the law. We know that he would not by

preference have chosen the law, and did not feel that his vocation lay that way. But it was the only way open to him for mending his fortunes. And so the two lives went on side by side, the worldly one—he would have said, the practical one—often interfering with the life of thought and discovery, and partly obscuring it, but yet always leaving it paramount in his own mind. His dearest and most cherished ideas, the thoughts with which he was most at home and happiest, his deepest and truest ambitions, were those of an enthusiastic and romantic believer in a great discovery just within his grasp. They were such as the dreams and visions of his great Franciscan namesake, and of the imaginative seekers after knowledge in the middle ages, real or mythical, Albert the Great, Cornelius Agrippa, Dr. Faustus ; they were the eager undoubting hopes of the physical students in Italy and England in his own time, Giordano Bruno, Telesio, Campanella, Gilbert, Galileo, or the founders of the Italian prototype of “Solomon’s House” in the *New Atlantis*, the precursor of our Royal Societies, the Academy of the *Lincei* at Rome. Among these meditations was his inner life. But however he may have originally planned his course, and though at times under the influence of disappointment he threatened to retire to Cambridge or to travel abroad, he had bound himself fast to public life, and soon ceased to think of quitting it. And he had a real taste for it, for its shows, its prizes, for the laws and turns of the game, for its debates and vicissitudes. He was no mere idealist or recluse to undervalue or despise the real grandeur of the world. He took the keenest interest in the nature and ways of mankind ; he liked to observe, to generalise in shrewd

and sometimes cynical epigrams. He liked to apply his powerful and fertile intellect to the practical problems of society and government, to their curious anomalies, to their paradoxical phenomena; he liked to address himself, either as an expounder or a reformer, to the principles and entanglements of English law; he aspired, both as a lecturer and a legislator, to improve and simplify it. It was not beyond his hopes to shape a policy, to improve administration, to become powerful by bringing his sagacity and largeness of thought to the service of the State, in reconciling conflicting forces, in mediating between jealous parties and dangerous claims. And he liked to enter into the humours of a Court; to devote his brilliant imagination and affluence of invention either to devising a pageant which should throw all others into the shade, or a compromise which should get great persons out of some difficulty of temper or pique.

In all these things he was as industrious, as laborious, as calmly persevering and tenacious, as he was in his pursuit of his philosophical speculations. He was a compound of the most adventurous and most diversified ambition, with a placid and patient temper, such as we commonly associate with moderate desires and the love of retirement and an easy life. To imagine and dare anything, and never to let go the object of his pursuit, is one side of him; on the other, he is obsequiously desirous to please and fearful of giving offence, the humblest and most grateful and also the most importunate of suitors, ready to bide his time with an even cheerfulness of spirit, which yet it was not safe to provoke by ill offices and the wish to thwart him. He never misses a chance of



proffering his services : he never lets pass an opportunity of recommending himself to those who could help him. He is so bent on natural knowledge that we have a sense of incongruity when we see him engaging in politics as if he had no other interest. He throws himself with such zest into the language of the moralist, the theologian, the historian, that we forget we have before us the author of a new departure in physical inquiry, and the unwearied compiler of tables of natural history. When he is a lawyer, he seems only a lawyer. If he had not been the author of the *Instauratio*, his life would not have looked very different from that of any other of the shrewd and supple lawyers who hung on to the Tudor and Stuart Courts, and who unscrupulously pushed their way to preferment. He claimed to be, in spite of the misgivings of Elizabeth and her ministers, as devoted to public work and as capable of it as any of them. He was ready for anything, for any amount of business, ready, as in everything, to take infinite trouble about it. The law, if he did not like it, was yet no by-work with him ; he was as truly ambitious as the men with whom he maintained so keen and for long so unsuccessful a rivalry. He felt bitterly the disappointment of seeing men like Coke and Fleming and Doddridge and Hobart pass before him ; he could not, if he had been only a lawyer, have coveted more eagerly the places, refused to him, which they got ; only, he had besides a whole train of purposes, an inner and supreme ambition, of which they knew nothing. And with all this, there is no apparent consciousness of these manifold and varied interests. He never affected to conceal from himself his superiority to other men in his aims and in the grasp of

his intelligence. But there is no trace that he prided himself on the variety and versatility of these powers, or that he even distinctly realised to himself that it was anything remarkable that he should have so many dissimilar objects and be able so readily to pursue them in such different directions.

It is doubtful whether, as long as Elizabeth lived, Bacon could ever have risen above his position among the "Learned Counsel," an office without patent or salary or regular employment. She used him, and he was willing to be used ; but he plainly did not appear in her eyes to be the kind of man who would suit her in the more prominent posts of her Government. Unusual and original ability is apt, till it is generally recognised, to carry with it suspicion and mistrust, as to its being really all that it seems to be. Perhaps she thought of the possibility of his flying out unexpectedly at some inconvenient pinch, and attempting to serve her interests, not in her way, but in his own ; perhaps she distrusted in business and state affairs so brilliant a discourseser, whose heart was known, first and above all, to be set on great dreams of knowledge ; perhaps those interviews with her in which he describes the counsels which he laid before her, and in which his shrewdness and foresight are conspicuous, may not have been so welcome to her as he imagined ; perhaps, it is not impossible, that he may have been too compliant for her capricious taste, and too visibly anxious to please. Perhaps, too, she could not forget, in spite of what had happened, that he had been the friend, and not the very generous friend, of Essex. But, except as to a share of the forfeitures, with which he was not satisfied, his fortunes did not rise under Elizabeth.

Whatever may have been the Queen's feelings towards him, there is no doubt that one powerful influence, which lasted into the reign of James, was steadily adverse to his advancement. Burghley had been strangely niggardly in what he did to help his brilliant nephew; he was going off the scene, and probably did not care to trouble himself about a younger and uncongenial aspirant to service. But his place was taken by his son, Robert Cecil; and Cecil might naturally have been expected to welcome the co-operation of one of his own family, who was foremost among the rising men of Cecil's own generation, and who certainly was most desirous to do him service. But it is plain that he early made up his mind to keep Bacon in the background. It is easy to imagine reasons, though the apparent shortsightedness of the policy may surprise us; but Cecil was too reticent and self-controlled a man to let his reasons appear, and his words, in answer to his cousin's applications for his assistance, were always kind, encouraging, and vague. But we must judge by the event, and that makes it clear that Cecil did not care to see Bacon in high position. Nothing can account for Bacon's strange failure for so long a time to reach his due place in the public service but the secret hostility, whatever may have been the cause, of Cecil.

There was also another difficulty. Coke was the great lawyer of the day, a man whom the Government could not dispense with, and whom it was dangerous to offend. And Coke thoroughly disliked Bacon. He thought lightly of his law, and he despised his refinement and his passion for knowledge. He cannot but have resented the impertinence, as he must have thought it, of Bacon having been for a whole year his rival for office. It is

possible that if people then agreed with Mr. Spedding's opinion as to the management of Essex's trial, he may have been irritated by jealousy ; but a couple of months after the trial (April 29, 1601) Bacon sent to Cecil, with a letter of complaint, the following account of a scene in Court between Coke and himself :—

*“ A true remembrance of the abuse I received of Mr. Attorney-General publicly in the Exchequer the first day of term ; for the truth whereof I refer myself to all that were present.*

“ I moved to have a reseizure of the lands of Geo. Moore, a relapsed recusant, a fugitive and a practising traytor ; and showed better matter for the Queen against the discharge by plea, which is ever with a *salvo jure*. And this I did in as gentle and reasonable terms as might be.

“ Mr. Attorney kindled at it, and said, ‘ *Mr. Bacon, if you have any tooth against me pluck it out ; for it will do you more hurt than all the teeth in your head will do you good.*’ I answered coldly in these very words : ‘ *Mr. Attorney, I respect you ; I fear you not ; and the less you speak of your own greatness, the more I will think of it.*’

“ He replied, ‘ *I think scorn to stand upon terms of greatness towards you, who are less than little ; less than the least ;*’ and other such strange light terms he gave me, with that insulting which cannot be expressed.

“ Herewith stirred, yet I said no more but this : ‘ *Mr. Attorney, do not depress me so far ; for I have been your better, and may be again, when it please the Queen.*’

“ With this he spake, neither I nor himself could tell what, as if he had been born Attorney-General ; and in the end bade me not meddle with the Queen's business, but with mine own ; and that I was unsworn, etc. I told him, sworn or unsworn was all one to an honest man ; and that I ever set my service first, and myself second ; and wished to God that he would do the like.

“ Then he said, it were good to clap a *cap. ultegatum* upon my back ! To which I only said he could not ; and that he was at fault, for he hunted upon an old scent. He gave me a number of dis-



graceful words besides ; which I answered with silence, and showing that I was not moved with them."

The threat of the *capias ullegatum* was probably in reference to the arrest of Bacon for debt in September 1593. After this, we are not surprised at Bacon writing to Coke, "who take to yourself a liberty to disgrace and disable my law, my experience, my discretion," that, "since I missed the Solicitor's place (the rather I think by your means) I cannot expect that you and I shall ever serve as Attorney and Solicitor together, but either serve with another on your remove, or step into some other course." And Coke, no doubt, took care that it should be so. Cecil, too, may possibly have thought that Bacon gave no proof of his fitness for affairs in thus bringing before him a squabble in which both parties lost their tempers.

Bacon was not behind the rest of the world in "the posting of men of good quality towards the King;" in the rush which followed the Queen's death, of those who were eager to proffer their services to James, for whose peaceful accession Cecil had so skilfully prepared the way. He wrote to every one who, he thought, could help him: to Cecil, and to Cecil's man—"I pray you, as you find time let him know that he is the personage in the State which I love most ;" to Northumberland, "If I may be of any use to your Lordship, by my head, tongue, pen, means, or friends, I humbly pray you to hold me your own ;" to the King's Scotch friends and servants, even to Southampton, the friend of Essex, who had been shut up in the Tower since his condemnation with Essex, and who was now released. "This great change," Bacon assured him, "hath wrought in me no other change



towards your Lordship than this, that I may safely be now that which I truly was before." Bacon found in after years that Southampton was not so easily conciliated. But at present Bacon was hopeful: "In mine own particular," he writes, "I have many comforts and assurances; but in mine own opinion the chief is, that the *canvassing world is gone, and the deserving world is come.*" He asks to be recommended to the King—"I commend myself to your love and to the well-using of my name, as well in repressing and answering for me, if there be any biting or nibbling at it in that place, as in impressing a good conceit and opinion of me, chiefly in the King, as otherwise in that Court." His pen had been used under the government of the Queen, and he had offered a draft of a proclamation to the King's advisers. But though he obtained an interview with the King, James's arrival in England brought no immediate prospect of improvement in Bacon's fortunes. Indeed, his name was at first inadvertently passed over in the list of Queen's servants who were to retain their places. The first thing we hear of is his arrest a second time for debt, and his letters of thanks to Cecil, who had rendered him assistance, are written in deep depression.

"For my purpose or course, I desire to meddle as little as I can in the King's causes, his Majesty now abounding in counsel; and to follow my private thrift and practice, and to marry with some convenient advancement. For as for any ambition, I do assure your Honour, mine is quenched. In the Queen's, my excellent Mistress's, time the *quorum* was small: her service was a kind of freehold, and it was a more solemn time. All those points agreed with my nature and judgement. My ambition now I shall only put upon my pen, whereby I shall be able to maintain memory and merit of the times succeeding.

“Lastly, for this divulged and almost prostituted title of knighthood, I could without charge, by your Honour’s mean, be content to have it, both because of this late disgrace and because I have three new knights in my mess in Gray’s Inn’s commons ; and because I have found out an alderman’s daughter, an handsome maiden, to my liking.”

Cecil, however, seems to have required that the money should be repaid by the day ; and Bacon only makes a humble request, which, it might be supposed, could have been easily granted.

“IT MAY PLEASE YOUR GOOD LORDSHIP—In answer of your last letter, your money shall be ready before your day : principal, interest, and costs of suit. So the sheriff promised, when I released errors ; and a Jew takes no more. The rest cannot be forgotten, for I cannot forget your Lordship’s *dum memor ipse mei* : and if there have been *aliquid nimis*, it shall be amended. And, to be plain with your Lordship, that will quicken me now which slackened me before. Then I thought you might have had more use of me than now I suppose you are like to have. Not but I think the impediment will be rather in my mind than in the matter or times. But to do you service I will come out of my religion at any time.

“For my knighthood, I wish the manner might be such as might grace me, since the matter will not ; I mean, that I might not be merely gregarious in a troop. The coronation is at hand. It may please your Lordship to let me hear from you speedily. So I continue your Lordship’s ever much bounden,

“FR. BACON.

“From Gorhambury, this 16th of July 1603.”

But it was not done. He “obtained his title, but not in a manner to distinguish him. He was knighted at Whitehall two days before the coronation, but had to share the honour with 300 others.”

It was not quite true that his “ambition was quenched.” For the rest of Cecil’s life Cecil was the

first man at James's Court ; and to the last there was one thing that Bacon would not appear to believe—he did not choose to believe that it was Cecil who kept him back from employment and honour. To the last he persisted in assuming that Cecil was the person who would help, if he could, a kinsman devoted to his interests and profoundly conscious of his worth. To the last he commended his cause to Cecil in terms of unstinted affection and confiding hope. It is difficult to judge of the sincerity of such language. The mere customary language of compliment employed by every one at this time was of a kind which to us sounds intolerable. It seems as if nothing that ingenuity could devise was too extravagant for an honest man to use, and for a man who respected himself to accept. It must not, indeed, be forgotten that conventionalities, as well as insincerity, differ in their forms in different times ; and that insincerity may lurk behind frank and clear words, when they are the fashion, as much as in what is like mere fulsome adulation. But words mean something, in spite of forms and fashions. When a man of great genius writes his private letters, we wish generally to believe on the whole what he says ; and there are no limits to the esteem, the honour, the confidence, which Bacon continued to the end to express towards Cecil. Bacon appeared to trust him—appeared, in spite of continued disappointments, to rely on his goodwill and good offices. But for one reason or another Bacon still remained in the shade. He was left to employ his time as he would, and to work his way by himself.

He was not idle. He prepared papers which he meant should come before the King, on the pressing subjects of

the day. The Hampton Court conference between the Bishops and the Puritan leaders was at hand, and he drew up a moderating paper on the *Pacification of the Church*. The feeling against him for his conduct towards Essex had not died away, and he addressed to Lord Mountjoy that *Apology concerning the Earl of Essex*, so full of interest, so skilfully and forcibly written, so vivid a picture of the Queen's ways with her servants, which has every merit except that of clearing Bacon from the charge of disloyalty to his best friend. The various questions arising out of the relations of the two kingdoms, now united under James, were presenting themselves. They were not of easy solution, and great mischief would follow if they were solved wrongly. Bacon turned his attention to them. He addressed a discourse to the King on the union of the two kingdoms, the first of a series of discussions on the subject which Bacon made peculiarly his own, and which, no doubt, first drew the King's attention and favour to him.

But for the first year of James's reign he was unnoticed by the King, and he was able to give his attention more freely to the great thought and hope of his life. This time of neglect gave him the opportunity of leisurely calling together and examining the ideas which had long had hold of his mind about the state of human knowledge, about the possibilities of extending it, about the hopes and powers which that new knowledge opened, and about the methods of realising this great prospect. This, the passion of his life, never asleep even in the hottest days of business, or the most hopeless days of defeat, must have had full play

during these days of suspended public employment. He was a man who was not easily satisfied with his attempts to arrange the order and proportions of his plans for mastering that new world of unknown truth, which he held to be within the grasp of man, if he would only dare to seize it; and he was much given to vary the shape of his work, and to try experiments in composition and even style. He wrote and rewrote. Besides what was finally published, there remains a larger quantity of work which never reached the stage of publication. He repeated over and over again the same thoughts, the same images and characteristic sayings. Among these papers is one which sums up his convictions about the work before him, and the vocation to which he had been called in respect of it. It is in the form of a "Proem" to a treatise on the *Interpretation of Nature*. It was never used in his published works; but, as Mr. Spedding says, it has a peculiar value as an authentic statement of what he looked upon as his special business in life. It is this mission which he states to himself in the following paper. It is drawn up in "stately Latin." Mr. Spedding's translation is no unworthy representation of the words of the great Prophet of Knowledge:—

"Believing that I was born for the service of mankind, and regarding the care of the Commonwealth as a kind of common property which, like the air and water, belongs to everybody, I set myself to consider in what way mankind might be best served, and what service I was myself best fitted by nature to perform.

"Now among all the benefits that could be conferred upon mankind, I found none so great as the discovery of new arts, endowments, and commodities for the bettering of man's life. . . . But if a man could succeed, not in striking out some particular invention, however useful, but in kindling a light in nature—a



light that should in its very rising touch and illuminate all the border regions that confine upon the circle of our present knowledge ; and so spreading further and further should presently disclose and bring into sight all that is most hidden and secret in the world,—that man (I thought) would be the benefactor indeed of the human race,—the propagator of man's empire over the universe, the champion of liberty, the conqueror and subduer of necessities.

“For myself, I found that I was fitted for nothing so well as for the study of Truth ; as having a mind nimble and versatile enough to catch the resemblances of things (which is the chief point), and at the same time steady enough to fix and distinguish their subtler differences ; as being gifted by nature with desire to seek, patience to doubt, fondness to meditate, slowness to assert, readiness to reconsider, carefulness to dispose and set in order ; and as being a man that neither affects what is new nor admires what is old, and that hates every kind of imposture. So I thought my nature had a kind of familiarity and relationship with Truth.

“Nevertheless, because my birth and education had seasoned me in business of State ; and because opinions (so young as I was) would sometimes stagger me ; and because I thought that a man's own country has some special claims upon him more than the rest of the world ; and because I hoped that, if I rose to any place of honour in the State, I should have a larger command of industry and ability to help me in my work ;—for these reasons I both applied myself to acquire the arts of civil life, and commended my service, so far as in modesty and honesty I might, to the favour of such friends as had any influence. In which also I had another motive : for I felt that those things I have spoken of—be they great or small—reach no further than the condition and culture of this mortal life ; and I was not without hope (the condition of religion being at that time not very prosperous) that if I came to hold office in the State, I might get something done too for the good of men's souls. When I found, however, that my zeal was mistaken for ambition, and my life had already reached the turning-point, and my breaking health reminded me how ill I could afford to be so slow, and I reflected moreover that in leaving undone the good that I could do by myself alone, and applying myself to that which could not be done without the help and consent of others, I was by no means discharging the duty that lay upon me,—I put all those

thoughts aside, and (in pursuance of my old determination) betook myself wholly to this work. Nor am I discouraged from it because I see signs in the times of the decline and overthrow of that knowledge and erudition which is now in use. Not that I apprehend any more barbarian invasions (unless possibly the Spanish empire should recover its strength, and having crushed other nations by arms should itself sink under its own weight): but the civil wars which may be expected, I think (judging from certain fashions which have come in of late), to spread through many countries—together with the malignity of sects, and those compendious artifices and devices which have crept into the place of solid erudition—seem to portend for literature and the sciences a tempest not less fatal, and one against which the Printing office will be no effectual security. And no doubt but that fair-weather learning which is nursed by leisure, blossoms under reward and praise, which cannot withstand the shock of opinion, and is liable to be abused by tricks and quackery, will sink under such impediments as these. Far otherwise is it with that knowledge, whose dignity is maintained by works of utility and power. For the injuries, therefore, which should proceed from the times, I am not afraid of them; and for the injuries which proceed from men, I am not concerned. For if any one charge me with seeking to be wise over-much, I answer simply that modesty and civil respect are fit for civil matters; in contemplations nothing is to be respected but Truth. If any one call on me for *works*, and that presently; I tell him frankly, without any imposture at all, that for me—a man not old, of weak health, my hands full of civil business, entering without guide or light upon an argument of all others the most obscure,—I hold it enough to have constructed the machine, though I may not succeed in setting it on work. . . . If, again, any one ask me, not indeed for actual works, yet for definite promises and forecasts of the works that are to be, I would have him know that the knowledge which we now possess will not teach a man even what to *wish*. Lastly—though this is a matter of less moment—if any of our politicians, who use to make their calculations and conjectures according to persons and precedents, must needs interpose his judgment in a thing of this nature, I would but remind him how (according to the ancient fable) the lame man keeping the course won the race of the swift man who left it; and that there is

no thought to be taken about precedents, for the thing is without precedent.

“For myself, my heart is not set upon any of those things which depend upon external accidents. I am not hunting for fame: I have no desire to found a sect, after the fashion of heresiarchs; and to look for any private gain from such an undertaking as this, I count both ridiculous and base. Enough for me the consciousness of well-deserving, and those real and effectual results with which Fortune itself cannot interfere.”

In 1604 James's first Parliament met, and with it Bacon returned to an industrious public life, which was not to be interrupted till it finally came to an end with his strange and irretrievable fall. The opportunity had come; and Bacon, patient, vigilant, and conscious of great powers and indefatigable energy, fully aware of all the conditions of the time, pushed at once to the front in the House of Commons. He lost no time in showing that he meant to make himself felt. The House of Commons had no sooner met than it was involved in a contest with the Chancery, with the Lords, and finally with the King himself, about its privileges—in this case, its exclusive right to judge of the returns of its members. Bacon's time was come for showing the King both that he was willing to do him service, and that he was worth being employed. He took a leading part in the discussions, and was trusted by the House as their spokesman and reporter in the various conferences. The King, in his overweening confidence in his absolute prerogative, had, indeed, got himself into serious difficulty; for the privilege was one which it was impossible for the Commons to give up. But Bacon led the House to agree to an arrangement which saved their rights; and under a cloud of words of extravagant flattery, he put the King in

good humour, and elicited from him the spontaneous proposal of a compromise which ended a very dangerous dispute. "The King's voice," said Bacon, in his report to the House, "was the voice of God in man, the good spirit of God in the mouth of man : I do not say the voice of God, and not of man : I am not one of Herod's flatterers : a curse fell upon him that said it, a curse on him that suffered it. We might say, as was said to Solomon, We are glad O King that we give account to you, because you discern what is spoken."

The course of this Parliament, in which Bacon was active and prominent, showed the King, probably for the first time, what Bacon was. The session was not so stormy as some of the later ones ; but occasions arose which revealed to the King and to the House of Commons the deeply discordant assumptions and purposes by which each party was influenced, and which brought out Bacon's powers of adjusting difficulties and harmonising claims. He never wavered in his loyalty to his own House, where it is clear that his authority was great. But there was no limit to the submission and reverence which he expressed to the King, and, indeed, to his desire to bring about what the King desired, as far as it could be safely done. Dealing with the Commons, his policy was "to be content with the substance and not to stand on the form." Dealing with the King, he was forward to recognise all that James wanted recognised of his kingcraft and his absolute sovereignty. Bacon assailed with a force and keenness, which showed what he could do as an opponent, the amazing and intolerable grievances arising out of the survival of such feudal customs as Wardship and Purveyance ; customs which made



over a man's eldest son and property, during a minority, to the keeping of the King, that is, to a King's favourite, and allowed the King's servants to cut down a man's timber before the windows of his house. But he urged that these grievances should be taken away with the utmost tenderness for the King's honour and the King's purse. In the great and troublesome questions relating to the Union he took care to be fully prepared. He was equally strong on points of certain and substantial importance, equally quick to suggest accommodations where nothing substantial was touched. His attitude was one of friendly and respectful independence. It was not misunderstood by the King. Bacon, who had hitherto been an unsworn and unpaid member of the Learned Counsel, now received his office by patent, with a small salary, and he was charged with the grave business of preparing the work for the Commissioners for the Union of the Kingdoms, in which, when the Commission met, he took a foremost and successful part.

But the Parliament before which their report was to be laid did not meet till ten months after the work of the Commission was done (Dec. 1604—Nov. 1605). For nearly another year Bacon had no public work. The leisure was used for his own objects. He was interested in history in a degree only second to his interest in nature; indeed, but for the engrossing claims of his philosophy of nature, he might have been the first and one of the greatest of our historians. He addressed a letter to the Chancellor Ellesmere on the deficiencies of British history, and on the opportunities which offered for supplying them. He himself could at present do nothing; "but because there be so many good painters, both for hand



and colours, it needeth but encouragement and instructions to give life and light unto it." But he mistook, in this as in other instances, the way in which such things are done. Men do not accomplish such things to order, but because their souls compel them, as he himself was building up his great philosophical structure, in the midst of his ambition and disappointment. And this interval of quiet enabled him to bring out his first public appeal on the subject which most filled his mind. He completed in English the *Two Books of the Advancement of Knowledge*, which were published at a book shop at the gateway of Gray's Inn in Holborn (Oct. 1605). He intended that it should be published in Latin also; but he was dissatisfied with the ornate translation sent him from Cambridge, and probably he was in a hurry to get the book out. It was dedicated to the King, not merely by way of compliment, but with the serious hope that his interest might be awakened in the subjects which were nearest Bacon's heart. Like other of Bacon's hopes, it was disappointed. The King's studies and the King's humours were not of the kind to make him care for Bacon's visions of the future, or his eager desire to begin at once a novel method of investigating the facts and laws of nature; and the appeal to him fell dead. Bacon sent the book about to his friends with explanatory letters. To Sir T. Bodley he writes:—

"I think no man may more truly say with the Psalm, *Multum incola fuit anima mea* [Ps. 120] than myself. For I do confess since I was of any understanding, my mind hath in effect been absent from that I have done; and in absence are many errors which I willingly acknowledge: and among them, this great one which led the rest; that knowing myself by inward calling to be fitter to hold a book than to play a part, I have led my life in civil causes,

for which I was not very fit by nature, and more unfit by the pre-occupation of my mind. Therefore, calling myself home, I have now enjoyed myself; whereof likewise I desire to make the world partaker."

To Lord Salisbury, in a note of elaborate compliment, he describes his purpose by an image which he repeats more than once. "I shall content myself to awake better spirits, *like a bell-ringer, which is first up to call others to church.*" But the two friends whose judgment he chiefly valued, and who, as on other occasions, were taken into his most intimate literary confidence, were Bishop Andrewes, his "inquisitor," and Toby Matthews, a son of the Archbishop of York, who had become a Roman Catholic, and lived in Italy, seeing a good deal of learned men there, apparently the most trusted of all Bacon's friends.

When Parliament met again in November 1605, the Gunpowder Plot and its consequences filled all minds. Bacon was not employed about it by Government, and his work in the House was confined to carrying on matters left unfinished from the previous session. On the rumour of legal promotions and vacancies Bacon once more applied to Salisbury for the Solicitorship (March 1606). But no changes were made, and Bacon was "still next the door." In May 1606 he did what had for some time been in his thoughts: he married; not the lady whom Essex had tried to win for him, that Lady Hatton who became the wife of his rival Coke, but one whom Salisbury helped him to gain, an alderman's daughter, Alice Barnham, "an handsome maiden," with some money and a disagreeable mother, by her second marriage, Lady Packington. Bacon's curious love of pomp amused the

gossips of the day. "Sir Francis Bacon," writes Carleton to Chamberlain, "was married yesterday to his young wench, in Maribone Chapel. He was clad from top to toe in purple, and hath made himself and his wife such store of raiments of cloth of silver and gold that it draws deep into her portion." Of his married life we hear next to nothing: in his *Essay on Marriage*, he is not enthusiastic in its praise; almost the only thing we know is that in his will, twenty years afterwards, he showed his dissatisfaction with his wife, who after his death married again. But it gave him an additional reason, and an additional plea, for pressing for preferment: and in the summer of 1606 the opening came. Coke was made Chief-Justice of the Common Pleas, leaving the Attorney's place vacant. A favourite of Salisbury's, Hobart, became Attorney, and Bacon hoped for some arrangement by which the Solicitor Doddridge might be otherwise provided for, and he himself become Solicitor. Hopeful as he was, and patient of disappointments, and of what other men would have thought injustice and faithlessness, he felt keenly both the disgrace and the inconvenience of so often expecting place, and being so often passed over. While the question was pending, he wrote to the King, the Chancellor, and Salisbury. His letter to the King is a record in his own words of his public services. To the Chancellor, whom he believed to be his supporter, he represented the discredit which he suffered—"he was a common gaze and a speech;" "the little reputation which by his industry he gathered, being scattered and taken away by continual disgraces, *every new man coming above me;*" and his wife and his wife's friends were making him feel it. The letters show what Bacon

thought to be his claims, and how hard he found it to get them recognised. To the Chancellor he urged, among other things, that time was slipping by :

“I humbly pray your Lordship to consider that time groweth precious with me, and that a married man is seven years elder in his thoughts the first day. . . . And were it not to satisfy my wife's friends, and to get myself out of being a common gaze and a speech, I protest before God I would never speak word for it. But to conclude, as my honourable Lady your wife was some mean to make me to change the name of another, so if it please you to help me to change my own name, I can be but more and more bounden to you ; and I am much deceived if your Lordship find not the King well inclined, and my Lord of Salisbury forward and affectionate.”

To Salisbury he writes :—

“I may say to your Lordship, in the confidence of your poor kinsman, and of a man by you advanced, *Tu idem fer opem, qui spem dedisti* ; for I am sure it was not possible for any living man to have received from another more significant and comfortable words of hope ; your Lordship being pleased to tell me, during the course of my last service, that you would raise me ; and that when you had resolved to raise a man, you were more careful of him than himself ; and that what you had done for me in my marriage was a benefit to me, but of no use to your Lordship. . . . And I know, and all the world knoweth, that your Lordship is no dealer of holy water, but noble and real ; and on my part I am of a sure ground that I have committed nothing that may deserve alteration. And therefore my hope is your Lordship will finish a good work, and consider that time groweth precious with me, and that I am now *vergentibus annis*. And although I know your fortune is not to need an hundred such as I am, yet I shall be ever ready to give you my best and first fruits, and to supply (as much as in me lieth) worthiness by thankfulness.”

Still the powers were deaf to his appeals ; at any rate he had to be content with another promise. Consider-

ing the ability which he had shown in Parliament, the wisdom and zeal with which he had supported the Government, and the important position which he held in the House of Commons, the neglect of him is unintelligible, except on two suppositions: that the Government, that is Cecil, were afraid of anything but the mere routine of law, as represented by such men as Hobart and Doddridge; or that Coke's hostility to him was unabated, and Coke still too important to be offended.

Bacon returned to work when the Parliament met, November 1606. The questions arising out of the Union, the question of naturalisation, its grounds and limits, the position of Scotchmen born *before* or *since* the King's accession, the *Antenati* and *Postnati*, the question of a union of laws, with its consequences, were discussed with great keenness and much jealous feeling. On the question of naturalisation Bacon took the liberal and larger view. The immediate union of laws he opposed as premature. He was a willing servant of the House, and the House readily made use of him. He reported the result of conferences, even when his own opinion was adverse to that of the House. And he reported the speeches of such persons as Lord Salisbury, probably throwing into them both form and matter of his own. At length, "silently, on the 25th of June," 1607, he was appointed Solicitor-General. He was then forty-seven.

"It was also probably about this time," writes Mr. Spedding, "that Bacon finally settled the plan of his '*Great Instauration*,' and began to call it by that name."



## CHAPTER IV.

### BACON SOLICITOR-GENERAL.

THE great thinker and idealist, the great seer of a world of knowledge to which the men of his own generation were blind, and which they could not, even with his help, imagine a possible one, had now won the first step in that long and toilsome ascent to success in life, in which for fourteen years he had been baffled. He had made himself, for good and for evil, a servant of the Government of James I. He was prepared to discharge with zeal and care all his duties. He was prepared to perform all the services which that Government might claim from its servants. He had sought, he had passionately pressed to be admitted within that circle in which the will of the King was the supreme law; after that, it would have been ruin to have withdrawn or resisted; but it does not appear that the thought or wish to resist or withdraw ever presented itself; he had thoroughly convinced himself that in doing what the King required he was doing the part of a good citizen and a faithful servant of the State and Commonwealth. The two lives, the two currents of purpose and effort, were still there. Behind all the wrangle of the courts and the devising of questionable legal subtleties to support some

unconstitutional encroachment, or to outflank the defence of some obnoxious prisoner, the high philosophical meditations still went on ; the remembrance of their sweetness and grandeur wrung more than once from the jaded lawyer or the baffled counsellor the complaint, in words which had a great charm for him, *Multum incola fuit anima mea*,—"My soul hath long dwelt," where it would not be. But opinion, and ambition, and the immense convenience of being great, and rich, and powerful, and the supposed necessities of his condition, were too strong even for his longings to be the interpreter and the servant of nature. There is no trace of the faintest reluctance on his part to be the willing minister of a court of which not only the principal figure, but the arbiter and governing spirit, was to be George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham.

The first leisure that Bacon had after he was appointed Solicitor he used in a characteristic way. He sat down to make a minute stock-taking of his position and its circumstances. In the summer of 1608 he devoted a week of July to this survey of his life, its objects and its appliances ; and he jotted down, day by day, through the week, from his present reflections, or he transcribed from former note-books, a series of notes in loose order, mostly very rough and not always intelligible, about everything that could now concern him. This curious and intimate record, which he called *Commentarius Solutus*, was discovered by Mr. Spedding, who not unnaturally had some misgivings about publishing so secret and so ambiguous a record of a man's most private confidences with himself. But there it was, and, as it was known, he no doubt decided wisely in publishing it as it stands ;

he has done his best to make it intelligible, and he has also done his best to remove any unfavourable impressions that might arise from it. It is singularly interesting as an evidence of Bacon's way of working, of his watchfulness, his industry, his care in preparing himself long beforehand for possible occasions, his readiness to take any amount of trouble about his present duties, his self-reliant desire for more important and difficult ones. It exhibits his habit of self-observation and self-correction, his care to mend his natural defects of voice, manner, and delivery; it is even more curious in showing him watching his own physical constitution and health, in the most minute details of symptoms and remedies, equally with a scientific and a practical object. It contains his estimate of his income, his expenditure, his debts, schedules of lands and jewels, his rules for the economy of his estate, his plans for his new gardens, and terraces, and ponds, and buildings at Gorhambury. He was now a rich man, valuing his property at £24,155 and his income at £4975, burdened with a considerable debt, but not more than he might easily look to wipe out. But, besides all these points, there appear the two large interests of his life, the reform of philosophy, and his ideal of a great national policy. The "greatness of Britain" was one of his favourite subjects of meditation. He puts down in his notes the outline of what should be aimed at to secure and increase it; it is to make the various forces of the great and growing empire work together in harmonious order, without waste, without jealousy, without encroachment and collision; to unite not only the interests but the sympathies and aims of the Crown with those of the people and Parliament; and

so to make Britain, now in peril from nothing but from the strength of its own discordant elements, that "Monarchy of the West" in reality, which Spain was in show, and, as Bacon always maintained, only in show. The survey of the condition of his philosophical enterprise takes more space. He notes the stages and points to which his plans have reached; he indicates, with a favourite quotation or apophthegm—"Plus ultra"—"*ausus vana contemnere*"—"aditus non nisi sub persona infantis," soon to be familiar to the world in his published writings—the lines of argument, sometimes alternative ones, which were before him; he draws out schemes of inquiry, specimen tables, distinctions and classifications about the subject of Motion, in English interlarded with Latin, or in Latin interlarded with English, of his characteristic and practical sort; he notes the various sources from which he might look for help and co-operation—"of learned men beyond the seas"—"to begin first in France to print it"—"laying for a place to command wits and pens:" he has his eye on rich and childless bishops, on the enforced idleness of State prisoners in the Tower, like Northumberland and Raleigh, on the great schools and universities, where he might perhaps get hold of some college for "Inventors"—as we should say, for the endowment of research. These matters fill up a large space of his notes. But his thoughts were also busy about his own advancement. And to these sheets of miscellaneous memoranda Bacon confided not only his occupations and his philosophical and political ideas, but, with a curious innocent unreserve, the arts and methods which he proposed to use in order to win the favour of the great and to pull down

the reputation of his rivals. He puts down in detail how he is to recommend himself to the King and the King's favourites :—

“To set on foot and maintain access with his Majesty, Dean of the Chapel, May, Murray. Keeping a course of access at the beginning of every term and vacation, with a memorial. To attend some time his repasts, or to fall into a course of familiar discourse. To find means to win a conceit, not open, but private, of being affectionate and assured to the Scotch, and fit to succeed Salisbury in his manage in that kind ; Lord Dunbar, Duke of Lennox, and Daubiny : secret.”

Then, again, of Salisbury :—

“Insinuate myself to become privy to my Lord of Salisbury's estate.” “To correspond with Salisbury in a habit of natural but no ways perilous boldness, and in vivacity, invention, care to cast and enterprise (but with due caution), for this manner I judge both in his nature freeth the stands, and in his ends pleaseth him best, and promiseth more use of me. I judge my standing out, and not favoured by Northampton, must needs do me good with Salisbury, specially comparative to the Attorney.”

The Attorney Hobart filled the place to which Bacon had so long aspired, and which he thought, perhaps reasonably, that he could fill much better. At any rate one of the points to which he recurs frequently in his notes, is to exhort himself to make his own service a continual contrast to the Attorney's ; “to have in mind and use the Attorney's weakness ;” enumerating a list of instances. “Too full of cases and distinctions. Nibbling solemnly ; he distinguisheth but apprehends not.” “No gift with his pen in proclamations and the like,” and at last he draws out in a series of epigrams his view of “Hubbard's disadvantages” :—

“Better at shift than at drift. . . *Subtilitas sine acrimonia*. . .



No power with the judge. . . He will alter a thing but not mend. . . He puts into patents and deeds words not of law but of common sense and discourse. . . Sociable save in profit. . . He doth depopulate mine office; otherwise called inclose. . . I never knew any one of so good a speech with a worse pen." . .

Then in a marginal note—"Solemn goose. Stately, leastwise nodd (?) crafty. They have made him believe that he is wondrous wise." And, finally, he draws up a paper of counsels and rules for his own conduct, "*Custumæ aptæ ad Individuum*"—which might supply an outline for an essay on the arts of behaviour proper for a rising official; a sequel to the biting irony of the essays on *Cunning* and *Wisdom for a Man's Self*.

"To furnish my L. of S. with ornaments for public speeches. To make him think how he should be revered by a Lord Chancellor, if I were; Princelike.

"To prepare him for matters to be handled in Council or before the King aforehand, and to show him and yield him the fruits of my care.

"To take notes in tables, when I attend the Council, and sometimes to move out of a memorial shewed and seen. To have particular occasions, fit and graceful and continual, to maintain private speech with every the great persons, and sometimes drawing more than one together. *Ex imitatione Att.* This specially in public places, and without care or affectation. At Council table to make good my L. of Salisb. motions and speeches, and for the rest sometimes one sometimes another; chiefly his, that is most earnest and in affection.

"To suppress at once my speaking, with panting and labour of breath and voice. Not to fall upon the main too sudden, but to induce and intermingle speech of good fashion. To use at once upon entrance given of speech, though abrupt, to compose and draw in myself. To free myself at once from payt. (?) of formality and compliment, though with some show of carelessness, pride, and rudeness."

(And then follows a long list of matters of business to be attended to.)

These arts of a court were not new ; it was not new for men to observe them in their neighbours and rivals. What was new was the writing them down, with deliberate candour, among a man's private memoranda, as things to be done and with the intention of practising them. This of itself, it has been suggested, shows that they were unfamiliar and uncongenial to Bacon ; for a man reminds himself of what he is apt to forget. But a man reminds himself also of what seems to him, at the moment, most important, and what he lays most stress upon. And it is clear that these are the rules, rhetorical and ethical, which Bacon laid down for himself in pursuing the second great object of his life—his official advancement ; and that, whatever we think of them, they were the means which he deliberately approved.

As long as Salisbury lived, the distrust which had kept Bacon so long in the shade kept him at a distance from the King's ear, and from influence on his counsels. Salisbury was the one Englishman in whom the King had become accustomed to confide, in his own conscious strangeness to English ways and real dislike and suspicion of them ; Salisbury had an authority which no one else had, both from his relations with James at the end of Elizabeth's reign, and as the representative of her policy and the depositary of its traditions ; and if he had lived, things might not, perhaps, have been better in James's government, but many things, probably, would have been different. But while Salisbury was supreme, Bacon, though very alert and zealous, was mainly busied with his official work ; and the Solicitor's place had become, as he says, a "mean thing" compared with the Attorney's, and also an extremely laborious

place, "one of the painfulest places in the kingdom." Much of it was routine ; but responsible and fatiguing routine. But if he was not in Salisbury's confidence, he was prominent in the House of Commons. The great and pressing subject of the time was the increasing difficulties of the revenue, created partly by the inevitable changes of a growing state, but much more by the King's incorrigible wastefulness. It was impossible to realise completely the great dream and longing of the Stuart kings and their ministers, to make the Crown independent of parliamentary supplies ; but to dispense with these supplies as much as possible, and to make as much as possible of the revenue permanent, was the continued and fatal policy of the Court. The "Great Contract"—a scheme by which, in return for the surrender by the Crown of certain burdensome and dangerous claims of the Prerogative, the Commons were to assure a large compensating yearly income to the Crown—was Salisbury's favourite device during the last two years of his life. It was not a prosperous one. The bargain was an ill-imagined and not very decorous transaction between the King and his people. Both parties were naturally jealous of one another, suspicious of underhand dealing and tacit changes of terms, prompt to resent and take offence, and not easy to pacify when they thought advantage had been taken ; and Salisbury, either by his own fault, or by yielding to the King's canny shiftiness, gave the business a more haggling and huckstering look than it need have had. Bacon, a subordinate of the Government, but a very important person in the Commons, did his part, loyally, as it seems, and skilfully in smoothing differences, and keeping awkward questions

from making their appearance. Thus he tried to stave off the risk of bringing definitely to a point the King's cherished claim to levy "impositions," or custom duties, on merchandise, by virtue of his prerogative—a claim which he warned the Commons not to dispute, and which Bacon, maintaining it as legal in theory, did his best to prevent them from discussing, and to persuade them to be content with restraining. Whatever he thought of the "Great Contract," he did what was expected of him in trying to gain for it fair play. But he made time for other things also. He advised, and advised soundly, on the plantation and finance of Ireland. It was a subject in which he took deep interest. A few years later, with only too sure a foresight, he gave the warning, "lest Ireland civil become more dangerous to us than Ireland savage." He advised—not soundly in point of law, but curiously in accordance with modern notions—about endowments; though, in this instance, in the famous will case of Thomas Sutton, the founder of the Charter House, his argument probably covered the scheme of a monstrous job in favour of the needy Court. And his own work went on in spite of the pressure of the Solicitor's place. To the first years of his official life belong three very interesting fragments, intended to find a provisional place in the plan of the "Great Instauration." To his friend Toby Matthews, at Florence, he sent in manuscript the great attack on the old teachers of knowledge, which is perhaps the most brilliant, and also the most insolently unjust and unthinking piece of rhetoric ever composed by him,—the *Redargutio Philosophiarum*.

"I send you at this time the only part which hath any harshness;



and yet I framed to myself an opinion, that whosoever allowed well of that preface which you so much commend, will not dislike, or at least ought not to dislike, this other speech of preparation ; for it is written out of the same spirit, and out of the same necessity. Nay it doth more fully lay open that the question between me and the ancients is not of the virtue of the race, but of the rightness of the way. And to speak truth, it is to the other but as *palma* to *pugnus*, part of the same thing more large. . . . Myself am like the miller of Huntingdon, that was wont to pray for peace amongst the willows ; for while the winds blew, the wind-mills wrought, and the water-mill was less customed. So I see that controversies of religion must hinder the advancement of sciences. Let me conclude with my perpetual wish towards yourself, that the approbation of yourself by your own discreet and temperate carriage, may restore you to your country, and your friends to your society. And so I commend you to God's goodness.

"Gray's Inn, this 10th of October 1609."

To Bishop Andrewes he sent, also in manuscript, another piece, belonging to the same plan—the deeply impressive treatise called *Visa et Cogitata*—what Francis Bacon had seen of nature and knowledge, and what he had come by meditation to think of what he had seen. The letter is not less interesting than the last, in respect to the writer's purposes, his manner of writing, and his relations to his correspondent.

"MY VERY GOOD LORD—Now your Lordship hath been so long in the church and the palace disputing between kings and popes, methinks you should take pleasure to look into the field, and refresh your mind with some matter of philosophy ; though that science be now through age waxed a child again, and left to boys and young men ; and because you were wont to make me believe you took liking to my writings, I send you some of this vacation's fruits ; and thus much more of my mind and purpose. I hasten not to publish ; perishing I would prevent. And I am forced to respect as well my times as the matter. For with me it is thus, and I think with all men in my case, if I bind myself to an argu-



ment, it loadeth my mind ; but if I rid my mind of the present cogitation, it is rather a recreation. This hath put me into these miscellanies ; which I purpose to suppress, if God give me leave to write a just and perfect volume of philosophy, which I go on with, though slowly. I send not your Lordship too much, lest it may glut you. Now let me tell you what my desire is. If your Lordship be so good now, as when you were the good Dean of Westminster, my request to you is, that not by pricks, but by notes, you would mark unto me whatsoever shall seem unto you either not current in the style, or harsh to credit and opinion, or inconvenient for the person of the writer ; for no man can be judge and party : and when our minds judge by reflection of ourselves, they are more subject to error. And though for the matter itself my judgement be in some things fixed, and not accessible by any man's judgement that goeth not my way, yet even in those things, the admonition of a friend may make me express myself diversly. I would have come to your Lordship, but that I am hastening to my house in the country. And so I commend your Lordship to God's goodness."

There was yet another production of this time, of which we have a notice from himself in a letter to Toby Matthews, the curious and ingenious little treatise on the *Wisdom of the Ancients*, "one of the most popular of his works," says Mr. Spedding, "in his own and in the next generation," but of value to us mainly for its quaint poetical colour, and the unexpected turns, like answers to a riddle, given to the ancient fables. When this work was published, it was the third time that he had appeared as an author in print. He thus writes about it and himself :—

"MR. MATTHEW—I do heartily thank you for your letter of the 24th of August from Salamanca ; and in recompense thereof, I send you a little work of mine that hath begun to pass the world. They tell me my Latin is turned into silver, and become current. Had you been here, you should have been my inquisitor before it came forth ; but I think the greatest inquisitor in Spain will allow

it. . . . My great work goeth forward : and, after my manner, I alter ever when I add. So that nothing is finished till all be finished.

‘From Gray’s Inn, the 17th of February 1610.’

In the autumn of 1611 the Attorney-General was ill, and Bacon reminded both the King and Salisbury of his claim. He was afraid, he writes to the King, with an odd forgetfulness of the persistency and earnestness of his applications, “that *by reason of my slowness to sue*, and apprehend occasions upon the sudden, keeping one plain course of painful service, I may *in fine dierum* be in danger to be neglected and forgotten.” The Attorney recovered ; but Bacon, on New Year’s Tide of 16<sup>11</sup>/<sub>12</sub>, wrote to Salisbury to thank him for his goodwill. It is the last letter of Bacon’s to Salisbury which has come down to us.

“IT MAY PLEASE YOUR GOOD LORDSHIP—I would entreat the new year to answer for the old, in my humble thanks to your Lordship, both for many your favours, and chiefly that upon the occasion of Mr. Attorney’s infirmity I found your Lordship even as I would wish. This doth increase a desire in me to express my thankful mind to your Lordship ; hoping that though I find age and decays grow upon me, yet I may have a flash or two of spirit left to do you service. And I do protest before God, without compliment or any light vein of mind, that if I knew in what course of life to do you best service, I would take it, and make my thoughts, which now fly to many pieces, be reduced to that center. But all this is no more than I am, which is not much, but yet the entire of him that is——”

In the following May (May 24, 1612) Salisbury died. From this date James passed from government by a minister, who, whatever may have been his faults, was laborious, public-spirited, and a statesman, into his own keeping and into the hands of favourites, who cared only

for themselves. With Cecil ceased the traditions of the days of Elizabeth and Burghley, in many ways evil and cruel traditions, but not ignoble and sordid ones; and James was left without the stay, and also without the check, which Cecil's power had been to him. The field was open for new men and new ways; the fashions and ideas of the time had altered during the last ten years, and those of the Queen's days had gone out of date. Would the new turn out for the better or the worse? Bacon, at any rate, saw the significance of the change and the critical eventfulness of the moment. It was his habit of old to send memorials of advice to the heads of the Government, apparently without such suggestions seeming more intrusive or officious than a leading article seems now, and perhaps with much the same effect. It was now a time to do so, if ever; and he was in an official relation to the King which entitled him to proffer advice. He at once prepared to lay his thoughts before the King, and to suggest that he could do far better service than Cecil, and was ready to take his place. The policy of the "Great Contract" had certainly broken down, and the King, under Cecil's guidance, had certainly not known how to manage an English parliament. In writing to the King, he found it hard to satisfy himself. Several draft letters remain, and it is not certain which of them, if any, was sent. But immediately on Salisbury's death he began, May 29th, a letter in which he said that he had never yet been able to show his affection to the King, "having been as a hawk tied to another's fist;" and if, "as was said to one that spake great words, *Amice, verba tua desiderant civitatem*, your Majesty say to me, *Bacon, your words*

*require a place to speak them,*" yet that "place or not place" was with the King. But the draft breaks off abruptly, and with the date of the 31st we have the following :—

"Your Majesty hath lost a great subject and a great servant. But if I should praise him in propriety, I should say that he was a fit man to keep things from growing worse, but no very fit man to reduce things to be much better. For he loved to have the eyes of all Israel a little too much upon himself, and to have all business still under the hammer, and like clay in the hands of the potter, to mould it as he thought good ; so that he was more *in operatione* than *in opere*. And though he had fine passages of action, yet the real conclusions came slowly on. So that although your Majesty hath grave counsellors and worthy persons left, yet you do as it were turn a leaf, wherein if your Majesty shall give a frame and constitution to matters, before you place the persons, in my simple opinion it were not amiss. But the great matter and most instant for the present, is the consideration of a Parliament, for two effects : the one for the supply of your estate, the other for the better knitting of the hearts of your subjects unto your Majesty, according to your infinite merit ; for both which, Parliaments have been and are the antient and honourable remedy.

"Now because I take myself to have a little skill in that region, as one that ever affected that your Majesty mought in all your causes not only prevail, but prevail with satisfaction of the inner man ; and though no man can say but I was a perfect and peremptory royalist, yet every man makes me believe that I was never one hour out of credit with the lower house ; my desire is to know, whether your Majesty will give me leave to meditate and propound unto you some preparative remembrances touching the future Parliament."

Whether he sent this or not, he prepared another draft. What had happened in the meanwhile we know not, but Bacon was in a bitter mood, and the letter reveals, for the first time, what was really in Bacon's heart about the "great subject and great servant," of



whom he had just written so respectfully, and with whom he had been so closely connected for most of his life. The fierceness which had been gathering for years of neglect and hindrance under that placid and patient exterior broke out. He offered himself as Cecil's successor in business of State. He gave his reason for being hopeful of success. Cecil's bitterest enemy could not have given it more bitterly.

"My principal end being to do your Majesty service, I crave leave to make at this time to your Majesty this most humble oblation of myself. I may truly say with the psalm, *Multum incola fuit anima mea*; for my life hath been conversant in things wherein I take little pleasure. Your Majesty may have heard somewhat that my father was an honest man, and somewhat you may have seen of myself, though not to make any true judgement by, because I have hitherto had only *potestatem verborum*, nor that neither. I was three of my young years bred with an ambassador in France, and since I have been an old truant in the school-house of your council-chamber, though on the second form; yet longer than any that now sitteth hath been upon the head form. If your Majesty find any aptness in me, or if you find any scarcity in others, whereby you may think it fit for your service to remove me to business of State; although I have a fair way before me for profit (and by your Majesty's grace and favour for honour and advancement), and in a course less exposed to the blasts of fortune, *yet now that he is gone, quo vivente virtutibus certissimum exitium*, I will be ready as a chessman to be wherever your Majesty's royal hand shall set me. Your Majesty will bear me witness, I have not suddenly opened myself thus far. I have looked upon others, I see the exceptions, I see the distractions, and I fear Tacitus will be a prophet, *magis alii homines quam alii mores*. I know mine own heart, and I know not whether God that hath touched my heart with the affection may not touch your royal heart to discern it. Howsoever, I shall at least go on honestly in mine ordinary course, and supply the rest in prayers for you, remaining, etc."

This is no hasty outburst. In a later paper on the



true way of retrieving the disorders of the King's finances, full of large and wise counsel, after advising the King not to be impatient, and assuring him that a state of debt is not so intolerable—"for it is no new thing for the greatest Kings to be in debt," and all the great men of the Court had been in debt without any "manner of diminution of their greatness"—he returns to the charge in detail against Salisbury and the Great Contract.

"My second prayer is, that your Majesty—in respect of the hasty freeing of your state—would not descend to any means, or degree of means, which carrieth not a symmetry with your Majesty and greatness. *He is gone from whom those courses did wholly flow.* To have your wants and necessities in particular as it were hanged up in two tablets before the eyes of your lords and commons, to be talked of for four months together; To have all your courses to help yourself in revenue or profit put into printed books, which were wont to be held *arcana imperii*: To have such worms of aldermen to lend for ten in the hundred upon good assurance, and with such entreaty (?) as if it should save the bark of your fortune: To contract still where mought be had the readiest payment, and not the best bargain: To stir a number of projects for your profit, and then to blast them, and leave your Majesty nothing but the scandal of them: To pretend even carriage between your Majesty's rights and the ease of the people, and to satisfy neither: These courses and others the like I hope are gone with the deviser of them; which have turned your Majesty to inestimable prejudice."

And what he thought of saying, but on further consideration struck out, was the following. It is no wonder that he struck it out, but it shows what he felt towards Cecil.

"I protest to God, though I be not superstitious, when I saw your M.'s book against Vorstius and Arminius, and noted your zeal to deliver the majesty of God from the vain and indign comprehensions of heresy and degenerate philosophy, as you had by your pen formerly endeavoured to deliver kings from the usurpation

of Rome, *perculsit illico animum* that God would set shortly upon you some visible favour, *and let me not live if I thought not of the taking away of that man.*"

And from this time onwards he scarcely ever mentions Cecil's name in his correspondence with James but with words of condemnation, which imply that Cecil's mischievous policy was the result of private ends. Yet this was the man to whom he had written the "New Year's Tide" letter six months before ; a letter which is but an echo to the last of all that he had been accustomed to write to Cecil, when asking assistance or offering congratulation. Cecil had, indeed, little claim on Bacon's gratitude ; he had spoken him fair in public, and no doubt in secret distrusted and thwarted him. But to the last Bacon did not choose to acknowledge this. Had James disclosed something of his dead servant, who left some strange secrets behind him, which showed his unsuspected hostility to Bacon ? Except on this supposition (but there is nothing to support it), no exaggeration of the liberty allowed to the language of compliment is enough to clear Bacon of an insincerity which is almost inconceivable in any but the meanest tools of power.

"I assure myself," wrote Bacon to the King, "your Majesty taketh not me for one of a busy nature ; for my estate being free from all difficulties, and I having such a large field for contemplation, as I have partly and shall much more make manifest unto your Majesty and the world, to occupy my thoughts, nothing could make me active but love and affection." So Bacon described his position with questionable accuracy—for his estate was not "free from difficulties"—in the new time coming. He was still kept out of the inner circle of the Council ; but from

the moment of Salisbury's death, he became a much more important person. He still sued for advancement, and still met with disappointment; the "mean men" still rose above him. The lucrative place of Master of the Wards was vacated by Salisbury's death. Bacon was talked of for it, and probably expected it, for he drew up new rules for it, and a speech for the new master; but the office and the speech went to Sir George Carey. Soon after Sir George Carey died. Bacon then applied for it through the new favourite, Rochester. "He was so confident of the place that he put most of his men into new cloaks;" and the world of the day amused itself at his disappointment, when the place was given to another "mean man," Sir Walter Cope, of whom the gossips wrote that if the "last two Treasurers could look out of their graves to see those successors in that place, they would be out of countenance with themselves, and say to the world *quantum mutatus*." But Bacon's hand and counsel appear more and more in important matters—the improvement of the revenue; the defence of extreme rights of the prerogative in the case against Whitelocke; the great question of calling a parliament, and of the true and "princely" way of dealing with it. His confidential advice to the King about calling a parliament was marked by his keen perception of the facts of the situation; it was marked too by his confident reliance on skilful indirect methods and trust in the look of things; it bears traces also of his bitter feeling against Salisbury, whom he charges with treacherously fomenting the opposition of the last Parliament. There was no want of worldly wisdom in it; certainly it was more adapted to James's ideas of statecraft than the simpler plan of Sir Henry Nevill, that the

King should throw himself frankly on the loyalty and goodwill of Parliament. And thus he came to be on easy terms with James, who was quite capable of understanding Bacon's resource and nimbleness of wit. In the autumn of 1613, the Chief-Justiceship of the King's Bench became vacant. Bacon at once gave the King reasons for sending Coke from the Common Pleas—where he was a check on the prerogative—to the King's Bench, where he could do less harm; while Hobart went to the Common Pleas. The promotion was obvious; but the Common Pleas suited Coke better, and the place was more lucrative. Bacon's advice was followed. Coke, very reluctantly, knowing well who had given it, and why, "not only weeping himself but followed by the tears" of all the Court of Common Pleas, moved up to the higher post. The Attorney Hobart, succeeded; and Bacon at last became Attorney (October 27, 1613). In Chamberlain's gossip we have an indication, such as occurs only accidentally, of the view of outsiders: "There is a strong apprehension that little good is to be expected by this change, and that Bacon may prove a dangerous instrument."

## CHAPTER V.

### BACON ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND CHANCELLOR.

THUS, at last, at the age of fifty-two, Bacon had gained the place which Essex had tried to get for him at thirty-two. The time of waiting had been a weary one, and it is impossible not to see that it had been hurtful to Bacon. A strong and able man, very eager to have a field for his strength and ability, who is kept out of it, as he thinks unfairly, and is driven to an attitude of suppliant dependency in pressing his claim on great persons who amuse him with words, can hardly help suffering in the humiliating process. It does a man no good to learn to beg, and to have a long training in the art. And further, this long delay kept up the distraction of his mind between the noble work on which his soul was bent, and the necessities of that "civil" or professional and political life by which he had to maintain his estate. All the time that he was "canvassing" (it is his own word) for office, and giving up his time and thoughts to the work which it involved, the great *Instauration* had to wait his hours of leisure; and his exclamation, so often repeated, *Multum incola fuit anima mea*; bears witness to the longings that haunted him in his hours of legal drudgery, or in the service of his not very thankful employers. Not but that he found



compensation in the interest of public questions, in the company of the great, in the excitement of state-craft and state employment, in the pomp and enjoyment of court life. He found too much compensation; it was one of his misfortunes. But his heart was always sound in its allegiance to knowledge; and if he had been fortunate enough to have risen earlier to the greatness which he aimed at as a vantage ground for his true work, or if he had had self-control to have dispensed with wealth and position—if he had escaped the long necessity of being a persistent and still baffled suitor—we might have had as a completed whole what we have now only in great fragments, and we should have been spared the blots which mar a career which ought to have been a noble one.

The first important matter that happened after Bacon's new appointment was the Essex divorce case, and the marriage of Lady Essex with the favourite whom Cecil's death had left at the height of power, and who from Lord Rochester was now made Earl of Somerset. With the divorce, the beginning of the scandals and tragedies of James's reign, Bacon had nothing to do. At the marriage which followed, Bacon presented as his offering a masque, performed by the members of Gray's Inn, of which he bore the charges, and which cost him the enormous sum of £2000. Whether it were to repay his obligations to the Howards, or in lieu of a "fee" to Rochester, who levied toll on all favours from the King, it can hardly be said, as has been suggested, to be a protest against the great abuse of the times, the sale of offices for money; the "very splendid trifle, the Masque of Flowers," was one form of the many extravagant

tributes paid but too willingly to high-handed worthlessness, of which the deeper and darker guilt was to fill all faces with shame two years afterwards.

As Attorney, Bacon had to take a much more prominent part in affairs, legal, criminal, constitutional, administrative, than he had yet been allowed to have. We know that it was his great object to show how much more active and useful an Attorney he could be than either Coke or Hobart; and as far as unflagging energy and high ability could make a good public servant, he fully carried out his purpose. In Parliament, the "addled Parliament" of 1614, in which he sat for the University of Cambridge, he did his best to reconcile what were fast becoming irreconcilable, the claims and prerogatives of an absolute king, irritable, suspicious, exacting, prodigal, with the ancient rights and liberties, growing stronger in their demands by being denied, resisted, or outwitted, of the popular element in the State. In the trials, which are so large and disagreeable a part of the history of these years, trials arising out of violent words provoked by the violent acts of power, one of which, Peacham's, became famous, because in the course of it torture was resorted to—or trials which witnessed to the corruption of the high society of the day, like the astounding series of arraignments and condemnations following on the discoveries relating to Overbury's murder, which had happened just before the Somerset marriage—Bacon had to make the best that he could for the cruel and often unequal policy of the Court; and Bacon must take his share in the responsibility for it. An effort on James's part to stop duelling brought from Bacon a worthier piece of service, in the shape of an earnest and elaborate argu-

ment against it, full of good sense and good feeling, but hopelessly in advance of the time. On the many questions which touched the prerogative, James found in his Attorney a ready and skilful advocate of his claims, who knew no limit to them, but in the consideration of what was safe and prudent to assert. He was a better and more statesmanlike counsellor. in his unceasing endeavours to reconcile James to the expediency of establishing solid and good relations with his Parliament, and in his advice as to the wise and hopeful ways of dealing with it. Bacon had no sympathy with popular wants and claims; of popularity, of all that was called popular, he had the deepest suspicion and dislike; the opinions and the judgment of average men he despised, as a thinker, a politician, and a courtier; the "malignity of the people" he thought great. "I do not love," he says, "the word *people*." But he had a high idea of what was worthy of a king, and was due to the public interests, and he saw the folly of the petty acts and haughty words, the use of which James could not resist. In his new office, he once more urged on, and urged in vain, his favourite project for revising, simplifying, and codifying the law. This was a project which would find little favour with Coke, and the crowd of lawyers who venerated him, men whom Bacon viewed with mingled contempt and apprehension both in the courts and in Parliament where they were numerous, and whom he more than once advised the King to bridle and keep "in awe." Bacon presented his scheme to the King in a Proposition, or, as we should call it, a Report. It is very able and interesting; marked with his characteristic comprehensiveness and sense of practical needs, and with a confidence in his own know-

ledge of law which contrasts curiously with the current opinion about it. He speaks with the utmost honour of Coke's work ; but he is not afraid of a comparison with him. "I do assure your Majesty," he says, "I am in good hope, that when Sir Edward Coke's Reports and my Rules and Decisions shall come to posterity, there will be (whatever is now thought) question who was the greater lawyer." But the project, though it was entertained and discussed in Parliament, came to nothing. No one really cared about it except Bacon.

But in these years (1615 and 1616) two things happened of the utmost consequence to him. One was the rise, more extravagant than anything that England had seen for centuries, and in the end more fatal, of the new favourite, who from plain George Villiers became the all-powerful Duke of Buckingham. Bacon, like the rest of the world, saw the necessity of bowing before him ; and Bacon persuaded himself that Villiers was pre-eminently endowed with all the gifts and virtues which a man in his place would need. We have a series of his letters to Villiers ; they are of course in the complimentary vein which was expected ; but if their language is only compliment, there is no language left for expressing what a man wishes to be taken for truth. The other matter was the humiliation, by Bacon's means and in his presence, of his old rival Coke. In the dispute about jurisdiction, always slumbering and lately awakened and aggravated by Coke, between the Common Law Courts and the Chancery, Coke had threatened the Chancery with *Præmunire*. The King's jealousy took alarm, and the Chief-Justice was called before the Council. There a decree, based on Bacon's advice and probably drawn



up by him, peremptorily overruled the legal doctrine maintained by the greatest and most self-confident judge whom the English courts had seen. The Chief-Justice had to acquiesce in this reading of the law ; and then, as if such an affront were not enough, Coke was suspended from his office, and, further, enjoined to review and amend his published reports, where they were inconsistent with the view of law which on Bacon's authority the Star Chamber had adopted (June 1616). This he affected to do ; but the corrections were manifestly only colourable ; his explanations of his legal heresies against the prerogative, as these heresies were formulated by the Chancellor and Bacon, and presented to him for recantation, were judged insufficient ; and in a decree, prefaced by reasons drawn up by Bacon, in which, besides Coke's errors of law, his "deceit, contempt, and slander of the Government," his "perpetual turbulent carriage," and his affectation of popularity, were noted,—he was removed from his office (Nov. 1616). So, for the present, the old rivalry had ended in a triumph for Bacon. Bacon, whom Coke had so long headed in the race, whom he had sneered at as a superficial pretender to law, and whose accomplishments and enthusiasm for knowledge he utterly despised, had not only defeated him, but driven him from his seat with dishonour. When we remember what Coke was, what he had thought of Bacon, and how he prized his own unique reputation as a representative of English law, the effects of such a disgrace on a man of his temper cannot easily be exaggerated.

But for the present Bacon had broken through the spell which had so long kept him back. He won a great deal of the King's confidence, and the King was more



and more ready to make use of him, though by no means equally willing to think that Bacon knew better than himself. Bacon's view of the law, and his resources of argument and expression to make it good, could be depended upon in the keen struggle to secure and enlarge the prerogative which was now beginning. In this prerogative both James and Bacon saw the safety of the State and the only reasonable hope of good government; but in Bacon's larger and more elevated views of policy, of a policy worthy of a great king, and a king of England, James was not likely to take much interest. The memorials which it was Bacon's habit to present on public affairs were wasted on one who had so little to learn from others,—so he thought and so all assured him,—about the secrets of empire. Still they were proofs of Bacon's ready mind; and James, even when he disagreed with Bacon's opinion and arguments, was too clever not to see their difference from the work of other men. Bacon rose in favour; and from the first he was on the best of terms with Villiers. He professed to Villiers the most sincere devotion. According to his custom he presented him with a letter of wise advice on the duties and behaviour of a favourite. He at once began, and kept up with him to the end, a confidential correspondence on matters of public importance. He made it clear that he depended upon Villiers for his own personal prospects, and it had now become the most natural thing that Bacon should look forward to succeeding the Lord Chancellor, Ellesmere, who was fast failing. Bacon had already (Feb. 12, 16 $\frac{1}{2}$  $\frac{5}{8}$ ), in terms which seem strange to us, but were less strange then, set forth in a letter to the King the reasons why he should be Chan-

cellor ; criticising justly enough, only that he was a party interested, the qualifications of other possible candidates, Coke, Hobart, and the Archbishop Abbott. Coke would be "an overruling nature in an overruling place," and "popular men were no sure mounters for your Majesty's saddle." Hobart was incompetent. As to Abbott, the Chancellor's place required "a whole man," and to have both jurisdiction, spiritual and temporal, "was fit only for a king." The promise that Bacon should have the place came to him three days afterwards through Villiers. He acknowledged it in a burst of gratitude (Feb. 15, 161 $\frac{5}{6}$ ). "I will now wholly rely on your excellent and happy self. . . . I am yours surer to you than my own life. For, as they speak of the Turquois stone in a ring, I will break into twenty pieces before you bear the least fall." They were unconsciously prophetic words. But Ellesmere lasted longer than was expected. It was not till a year after this promise that he resigned. On the 7th of March 161 $\frac{6}{7}$  Bacon received the seals. He expresses his obligations to Villiers, now Lord Buckingham, in the following letter :—

"MY DEAREST LORD—It is both in cares and kindness, that small ones float up to the tongue, and great ones sink down into the heart with silence. Therefore I could speak little to your Lordship to-day, neither had I fit time: but I must profess thus much, that in this day's work you are the truest and perfectest mirror and example of firm and generous friendship that ever was in court. And I shall count every day lost, wherein I shall not either study your well doing in thought, or do your name honour in speech, or perform you service in deed. Good my Lord, account and accept me, your most bounden and devoted friend and servant of all men living,

"March 7, 1616 (*i.e.* 161 $\frac{7}{8}$ ).

FR. BACON, C.S."

He himself believed the appointment to be a popular

one. "I know I am come in," he writes to the King soon after, "with as strong an envy of some particulars, as with the love of the general." On the 7th of May 1617 he took his seat in Chancery with unusual pomp and magnificence; and set forth, in an opening speech, with all his dignity and force, the duties of his great office, and his sense of their obligation. But there was a curious hesitation in treating him as other men were treated in like cases. He was only "Lord Keeper." It was not till the following January ( $16\frac{1}{8}$ ) that he received the office of Lord Chancellor. It was not till half a year afterwards that he was made a Peer. Then he became Baron Verulam (July 1618), and in January  $16\frac{2}{1}$  Viscount St. Alban's.

From this time Bacon must be thought of, first and foremost, as a Judge in the great seat which he had so earnestly sought. It was the place not merely of law, which often tied the judge's hands painfully, but of true justice, when law failed to give it. Bacon's ideas of the duties of a judge were clear and strong, as he showed in various admirable speeches and charges: his duties as regards his own conduct and reputation; his duties in keeping his subordinates free from the taint of corruption. He was not ignorant of the subtle and unacknowledged ways in which unlawful gains may be covered by custom, and an abuse goes on because men will not choose to look at it. He entered on his office with the full purpose of doing its work better than it had ever been done. He saw where it wanted reforming, and set himself at once to reform. The accumulation and delay of suits had become grievous; at once he threw his whole energy into the task of

wiping out the arrears which the bad health of his predecessor, and the traditional sluggishness of the court, had heaped up. In exactly three months from his appointment he was able to report that these arrears had been cleared off. "This day" (June 8, 1617), he writes to Buckingham: "I have made even with the business of the kingdom for common justice. Not one cause unheard. The lawyers drawn dry of all the motions they were to make. Not one petition unheard. And this I think could not be said in our time before."

The performance was splendid, and there is no reason to think that the work so rapidly done was not well done. We are assured that Bacon's decisions were unquestioned and were not complained of. At the same time, before this allegation is accepted as conclusive proof of the public satisfaction, it must be remembered that the question of his administration of justice, which was at last to assume such strange proportions, has never been so thoroughly sifted as, to enable us to pronounce upon it, it should be. The natural tendency of Bacon's mind would undoubtedly be to judge rightly and justly; but the negative argument of the silence at the time of complainants, in days when it was so dangerous to question authority, and when we have so little evidence of what men said at their firesides, is not enough to show that he never failed.

But the serious thing is that Bacon subjected himself to two of the most dangerous influences which can act on the mind of a judge—the influence of the most powerful and most formidable man in England, and the influence of presents, in money and other gifts. From first to last, he allowed Buckingham, whom no man, as Bacon



soon found, could displease except at his own peril, to write letters to him on behalf of suitors whose causes were before him ; and he allowed suitors, not often while the cause was pending, but sometimes even then, to send him directly, or through his servants, large sums of money. Both these things are explained. It would have been characteristic of Bacon to be confident that he could defy temptation : these habits were the fashion of the time, and everybody took them for granted ; Buckingham never asked his good offices beyond what Bacon thought just and right, and asked them rather for the sake of expedition, than to influence his judgment. And as to the money presents—every office was underpaid ; this was the common way of acknowledging pains and trouble ; it was analogous to a doctor's or a lawyer's fee now. And there is no proof that either influence ever led Bacon to do wrong. This has been said, and said with some degree of force. But if it shows that Bacon was not in this matter below his age, it shows that he was not above it. No one knew better than Bacon that there were no more certain dangers to honesty and justice, than the interference and solicitation of the great, and the old famous pest of bribes, of which all histories and laws were full. And yet on the highest seat of justice in the realm he, the great reformer of its abuses, allowed them to make their customary haunt. He did not mean to do wrong : his conscience was clear ; he had not given thought to the mischief they must do, sooner or later, to all concerned with the Court of Chancery. With a magnificent carelessness he could afford to run safely a course closely bordering on crime, in which meaner men would sin and be ruined.

Before six months were over Bacon found on what terms he must stand with Buckingham. By a strange fatality, quite unintentionally, he became dragged into the thick of the scandalous and grotesque dissensions of the Coke family. The Court was away from London in the North; and Coke had been trying, not without hope of success, to recover the King's favour. Coke was a rich man, and Lady Compton, the mother of the Villiers, thought that Coke's daughter would be a good match for one of her younger sons. It was really a great chance for Coke; but he haggled about the portion; and the opportunity, which might perhaps have led to his taking Bacon's place, passed. But he found himself in trouble in other ways; his friends, especially Secretary Winwood, contrived to bring the matter on again, and he consented to the Villiers's terms. But his wife, the young lady's mother, Lady Hatton, would not hear of it, and a furious quarrel followed. She carried off her daughter into the country. Coke, with a warrant from Secretary Winwood, which Bacon had refused to give him, pursued her: "with his son, 'Fighting Clem,' and ten or eleven servants, weaponed, in a violent manner, he repaired to the house where she was remaining, and with a piece of timber or form broke open the door and dragged her along to his coach." Lady Hatton rushed off the same afternoon for help to Bacon.

After an overturn by the way, "at last to my Lord Keeper's they come, but could not have instant access to him for that his people told them he was laid at rest, being not well. Then my La. Hatton desired she might be in the next room where my Lord lay, that she might be the first that [should] speak with him after he was stirring. The door-keeper fulfilled her desire, and in the

meantime gave her a chair to rest herself in, and there left her alone ; but not long after, she rose up and bounced against my Lord Keeper's door, and waked him and affrighted him, that he called his men to him ; and they opening the door, she thrust in with them, and desired his Lp. to pardon her boldness, but she was like a cow that had lost her calf, and so justified [herself] and pacified my Lord's anger, and got his warrant and my Lo. Treasurer's warrant and others of the Council to fetch her daughter from the father and bring them both to the Council."

It was a chance that the late Chief-Justice and his wife, with their armed parties, did not meet on the road, in which case "there were like to be strange tragedies." At length the Council compelled both sides to keep the peace, and the young lady was taken for the present out of the hands of her raging parents. Bacon had assumed that the affair was the result of an intrigue between Winwood and Coke, and that the Court would take part against Coke, a man so deep in disgrace and so outrageously violent. Supposing that he had the ear of Buckingham, he wrote earnestly persuading him to put an end to the business: and in the meantime the Council ordered Coke to be brought before the Star Chamber "for riot and force," to "be heard and sentenced as justice shall appertain." They had not the slightest doubt that they were doing what would please the King. A few days after they met, and then they learned the truth.

"Coke and his friends," writes Chamberlain, "complain of hard measure from some of the greatest at that board, and that he was too much trampled upon with ill language. And our friend [*i.e.* Winwood] passed out scot free for the warrant: which the greatest [*word illegible*] there said was subject to a *præmunire*; and withal told the Lady Compton that they wished well to her and her sons, and would be ready to serve the Earl of Buckingham with all true affection, whereas others did it out of faction and

ambition :—which words glancing directly at our good friend (Winwood), he was driven to make his apology ; and to show how it was put upon him from time to time by the Queen and other parties ; and, for conclusion, showed a letter of approbation of all his courses from the King, making the whole table judge what faction and ambition appeared in this carriage. *Ad quod non fuit responsum.*”

None indeed, but blank faces, and thoughts of what might come next. The Council, and Bacon foremost, had made a desperate mistake. “It is evident,” as Mr. Spedding says, “that he had not divined Buckingham’s feelings on the subject.” He was now to learn them. To his utter amazement and alarm he found that the King was strong for the match, and that the proceeding of the Council was condemned at Court as gross misconduct. In vain he protested that he was quite willing to forward the match ; that in fact he had helped it. Bacon’s explanations and his warnings against Coke the King “rejected with some disdain” ; he justified Coke’s action ; he charged Bacon with disrespect and ingratitude to Buckingham : he put aside his arguments and apologies as worthless or insincere. Such reprimands had not often been addressed, even to inferior servants. Bacon’s letters to Buckingham remained at first without notice : when Buckingham answered, he did so with scornful and menacing curtness. Meanwhile Bacon heard from Yelverton how things were going at Court.

“Sir E. Coke,” he wrote, “hath not forborne by any engine to heave at both your Honour and myself, and he works the weightiest instrument, the Earl of Buckingham, who, as I see, sets him as close to him as his shirt, the Earl speaking in Sir Edward’s phrase, and as it were menacing in his spirit.”

Buckingham, he went on to say, “did nobly and



plainly tell me he would not secretly bite, but whosoever had had any interest, or tasted of the opposition to his brother's marriage, he would as openly oppose them to their faces, and they should discern what favour he had by the power he would use." The Court, like a pack of dogs, had set upon Bacon. "It is too common in every man's mouth in Court, that your greatness shall be abated, and as your tongue hath been as a razor unto some, so shall theirs be to you." Buckingham said to every one that Bacon had been forgetful of his kindness, and unfaithful to him: "not forbearing in open speech to tax you, as if it were an inveterate custom with you, to be unfaithful unto him, as you were to the Earls of Essex and Somerset."

All this while Bacon had been clearly in the right. He had thrust himself into no business that did not concern him. He had not, as Buckingham accuses him of having done,—“overtroubled” himself with the marriage. He had done his simple duty as a friend, as a councillor, as a judge. He had been honestly zealous for the Villiers's honour, and warned Buckingham of things that were beyond question. He had curbed Coke's scandalous violence, perhaps with no great regret, but with manifest reason. But for this, he was now on the very edge of losing his office; it was clear to him, as it is clear to us, that nothing could save him but absolute submission. He accepted the condition. How this submission was made and received, and with what gratitude he found that he was forgiven, may be seen in the two following letters. Buckingham thus extends his grace to the Lord Keeper, and exhorts him to better behaviour:—

“But his Majesty’s direction in answer of your letter hath given me occasion to join hereunto a discovery unto you of mine inward thoughts, proceeding upon the discourse you had with me this day. For I do freely confess that your offer of submission unto me, and in writing (if so I would have it), battered so the unkindness that I had conceived in my heart for your behaviour towards me in my absence, as out of the sparks of my old affection toward you I went to sound his Majesty’s intention how he means to behave himself towards you, specially in any public meeting; where I found on the one part his Majesty so little satisfied with your late answer unto him, which he counted (for I protest I use his own terms) *confused and childish*, and his vigorous resolution on the other part so fixed, that he would put some public exemplary mark upon you, as I protest the sight of his deep-conceived indignation quenched my passion, making me upon the instant change from the person of a party into a peace-maker; so as I was forced upon my knees to beg of his Majesty that he would put no public act of disgrace upon you, and, as I dare say, no other person would have been patiently heard in this suit by his Majesty but myself, so did I (though not without difficulty) obtain thus much:—that he would not so far disable you from the merit of your future service, as to put any particular mark of disgrace upon your person. Only thus far his Majesty protesteth, that upon the conscience of his office he cannot omit (though laying aside all passion) to give a kingly reprimand at his first sitting in council to so many of his counsellors as were then here behind, and were actors in this business, for their ill behaviour in it. Some of the particular errors committed in this business he will name, but without accusing any particular persons by name.

“Thus your Lordship seeth the fruits of my natural inclination; and I protest all this time past it was no small grief unto me to hear the mouth of so many upon this occasion open to load you with innumerable malicious and detracting speeches, as if no music were more pleasing to my ears than to rail of you: which made me rather regret the ill nature of mankind, that like dogs love to set upon him that they see once snatched at. And to conclude, my Lord, you have hereby a fair occasion so to make good hereafter your reputation by your sincere service to his Majesty, as also by your firm and constant kindness to your friends, as I may

(your Lordship's old friend) participate of the comfort and honour that will thereby come to you. Thus I rest at last

“Your Lordship's faithful friend and servant,

“G. B.”

“MY EVER BEST LORD, now better than yourself—Your Lordship's pen, or rather pencil, hath pourtrayed towards me such magnanimity and nobleness and true kindness, as methinketh I see the image of some ancient virtue, and not anything of these times. It is the line of my life, and not the lines of my letter, that must express my thankfulness : wherein if I fail, then God fail me, and make me as miserable as I think myself at this time happy by this reviver, through his Majesty's singular clemency, and your incomparable love and favour. God preserve you, prosper you, and reward you for your kindness to

“Your raised and infinitely obliged friend and servant,

“Sept. 22, 1617.

FR. BACON, C.S.”

Thus he had tried his strength with Buckingham. He had found that this, “a little parent-like” manner of advising him, and the doctrine that a true friend “ought rather to go against his mind than his good,” was not what Buckingham expected from him. And he never ventured on it again. It is not too much to say that a man who could write as he now did to Buckingham, could not trust himself, in any matter in which Buckingham was interested.

But the reconciliation was complete, and Bacon took his place more and more as one of the chief persons in the Government. James claimed so much to have his own way, and had so little scruple in putting aside, in his superior wisdom, sometimes very curtly, Bacon's or any other person's recommendations, that though his services were great, and were not unrecognised, he never had the power and influence in affairs to which his boundless devotion to the Crown, his grasp of business, and his

willing industry, ought to have entitled him. He was still a servant, and made to feel it, though a servant in the "first form." It was James and Buckingham who determined the policy of the country, or settled the course to be taken in particular transactions; when this was settled, it was Bacon's business to carry it through successfully. In this he was like all the other servants of the Crown, and like them, he was satisfied with giving his advice, whether it were taken or not; but unlike many of them, he was zealous in executing with the utmost vigour and skill the instructions which were given him. Thus he was required to find the legal means for punishing Raleigh; and, as a matter of duty, he found them. He was required to tell the Government side of the story of Raleigh's crimes and punishment—which really was one side of the story, only not by any means the whole; and he told it, as he had told the Government story against Essex, with force, moderation, and good sense. Himself, he never would have made James's miserable blunders about Raleigh; but the blunders being made, it was his business to do his best to help the King out of them. When Suffolk, the Lord Treasurer, was disgraced and brought before the Star Chamber for corruption and embezzlement in his office, Bacon thought that he was doing no more than his duty in keeping Buckingham informed day by day how the trial was going on; how he had taken care that Suffolk's submission should not stop it—"for all would be but a play on the stage if justice went not on in the right course"—how he had taken care that the evidence went well—"I will not say I sometime help it, as far as was fit for a judge"—how "a little to warm the



business" . . . "I spake a word, that he that did draw or milk treasure from Ireland, did not, *emulgere*, milk money, but blood." This, and other "little things" like it, while he was sitting as a judge to try, if the word may be used, a personal enemy of Buckingham, however bad the case might be against Suffolk, sound strange indeed to us; and not less so when, in reporting the sentence and the various opinions of the Council about it, he, for once, praises Coke for the extravagance of his severity:—"Sir Edward Coke did his part. I have not heard him do better; and began with a fine of £100,000, but the judges first, and most of the rest, reduced it to £30,000. I do not dislike that thing passed moderately; and all things considered, it is not amiss, and might easily have been worse."

In all this, which would have been perfectly natural from an Attorney-General of the time, Bacon saw but his duty, even as a judge between the Crown and the subject. It was what was expected of those whom the King chose to employ, and whom Buckingham chose to favour. But a worse and more cruel case, illustrating the system which a man like Bacon could think reasonable and honourable, was the disgrace and punishment of Yelverton, the Attorney-General, the man who had stood by Bacon, and in his defence had faced Buckingham, knowing well Buckingham's dislike of himself, when all the Court turned against Bacon in his quarrel with Coke and Lady Compton. Towards the end of the year 1620, on the eve of a probable meeting of Parliament, there was great questioning about what was to be done about certain patents and monopolies—monopolies for making gold and silk thread and for licensing inns and ale-

houses—which were in the hands of Buckingham's brothers and their agents. The monopolies were very unpopular; there was always doubt as to their legality; they were enforced oppressively and vexatiously by men like Michell and Mompesson, who acted for the Villiers; and the profits of them went, for the most part, not into the Exchequer, but into the pockets of the hangers-on of Buckingham. Bacon defended them both in law and policy, and his defence is thought by Mr. Gardiner to be not without grounds; but he saw the danger of obstinacy in maintaining what had become so hateful in the country, and strongly recommended that the more indefensible and unpopular patents should be spontaneously given up, the more so as they were of "no great fruit." But Buckingham's insolent perversity "refused to be convinced." The Council, when the question was before them, decided to maintain them. Bacon, who had rightly voted in the minority, thus explains his own vote to Buckingham:—"The King did wisely put it upon and consult, whether the patents were at this time to be removed by Act of Council before Parliament. *I opined (but yet somewhat like Ovid's mistress, that strove, but yet as one that would be overcome), that yes!*" But in the various disputes which had arisen about them, Yelverton had shown that he very much disliked the business of defending monopolies, and sending London citizens to jail for infringing them. He did it, but he did it grudgingly. It was a great offence in a man whom Buckingham had always disliked; and it is impossible to doubt that what followed was the consequence of his displeasure.

"In drawing up a new charter for the city of London," writes Mr.

Gardiner, Yelverton inserted clauses for which he was unable to produce a warrant. The worst that could be said was that he had, through inadvertence, misunderstood the verbal directions of the King. Although no imputation of corruption was brought against him, yet he was suspended from his office, and prosecuted in the Star Chamber. He was then sentenced to dismissal from his post, to a fine of £4000, and to imprisonment during the Royal pleasure."

In the management of this business Bacon had the chief part. Yelverton, on his suspension, at once submitted. The obnoxious clauses are not said to have been of serious importance ; but they were new clauses which the King had not sanctioned, and it would be a bad precedent to pass over such unauthorised additions even by an Attorney-General. "I mistook many things," said Yelverton afterwards in words which come back into our minds at a later period, "I was improvident in some things, and too credulous in all things." It might have seemed that dismissal, if not a severe reprimand, was punishment enough. But the submission was not enough, in Bacon's opinion, "for the King's honour." He dwelt on the greatness of the offence, and the necessity of making a severe example. According to his advice, Yelverton was prosecuted in the Star Chamber. It was not merely a mistake of judgment. "Herein," said Bacon, "I note the wisdom of the law of England, which termeth the highest contempt and excesses of authority, *Misprisions* ; which (if you take the sound and derivation of the words) is but *mistaken* ; but if you take the use and acceptation of the word, it is high and heinous contempt and usurpation of authority ; whereof the reason I take to be and the name excellently imposed, for that main mistaking, it is ever joined with contempt ; for he that reveres will not easily mistake ; but he that

slights, and thinks more of the greatness of his place than of the duty of his place, will soon commit misprisions." The day would come when this doctrine would be pressed with ruinous effect against Bacon himself. But now he expounded with admirable clearness the wrongness of carelessness about warrants and of taking things for granted. He acquitted his former colleague of "corruption of reward"; but "in truth that makes the offence rather divers than less;" for some offences "are black, and others scarlet, some sordid, some presumptuous." He pronounced his sentence—the fine, the imprisonment; "for his place, I declare him unfit for it." "And the next day," says Mr. Spedding, "he reported to Buckingham the result of the proceeding," and takes no small credit for his own part in it.

It was thus that the Court used Bacon, and that Bacon submitted to be used. He could have done, if he had been listened to, much nobler service. He had from the first seen, and urged as far as he could, the paramount necessity of retrenchment in the King's profligate expenditure. Even Buckingham had come to feel the necessity of it at last; and now that Bacon filled a seat at the Council, and that the prosecution of Suffolk and an inquiry into the abuses of the Navy had forced on those in power the urgency of economy, there was a chance of something being done to bring order into the confusion of the finances. Retrenchment began at the King's kitchen and the tables of his servants; an effort was made, not unsuccessfully, to extend it wider, under the direction of Lionel Cranfield, a self-made man of business from the city; but with such a Court the task was an impossible one. It was not Bacon's fault, though he



sadly mismanaged his own private affairs, that the King's expenditure was not managed soberly and wisely. Nor was it Bacon's fault, as far as advice went, that James was always trying either to evade or to outwit a Parliament which he could not, like the Tudors, overawe. Bacon's uniform counsel had been—Look on a Parliament as a certain necessity, but not only as a necessity ; as also a unique and most precious means for uniting the Crown with the nation, and proving to the world outside how Englishmen love and honour their King, and their King trusts his subjects. Deal with it frankly and nobly as becomes a king, not suspiciously like a huckster in a bargain. Do not be afraid of Parliament. Be skilful in calling it ; but don't attempt to "pack" it. Use all due adroitness and knowledge of human nature, and necessary firmness and majesty, in managing it ; keep unruly and mischievous people in their place ; but do not be too anxious to meddle, "let nature work ;" and above all, though of course you want money from it, do not let that appear as the chief or real cause of calling it. Take the lead in legislation. Be ready with some interesting or imposing points of reform or policy, about which you ask your Parliament to take counsel with you. Take care to "frame and have ready some commonwealth bills, that may add respect to the King's government, and acknowledgment of his care ; not *wooing* bills to make the King and his graces cheap ; but good matter to set the Parliament on work, that an empty stomach do not feed on humour."—So from the first had Bacon always thought ; so he thought when he watched, as a spectator, James's blunders with his first Parliament of 1604 ; so had he earnestly counselled James, when ad-

mitted to his confidence, as to the Parliaments of 1614 and 1615 ; so again, but in vain, as Chancellor, he advised him to meet the Parliament of 1620. It was wise, and from his point of view, honest advice, though there runs all through it too much reliance on appearances which were not all that they seemed ; there was too much thought of throwing dust in the eyes of troublesome and inconvenient people. But whatever motives there might have been behind, it would have been well if James had learned from Bacon how to deal with Englishmen. But he could not. "I wonder," said James one day to Gondomar, "that my ancestors should ever have permitted such an institution as the House of Commons to have come into existence. I am a stranger, and found it here when I arrived, so that I am obliged to put up with what I cannot get rid of." James was the only one of our many foreign kings who, to the last, struggled to avoid submitting himself to the conditions of an English throne.

## CHAPTER VI.

### BACON'S FALL.

WHEN Parliament met on January 30, 1629, and Bacon, as Lord Chancellor, set forth in his ceremonial speeches, to the King and to the Speaker, the glories and blessings of James's reign, no man in England had more reason to think himself fortunate. He had reached the age of sixty, and had gained the object of his ambition. More than that, he was conscious that in his great office he was finding full play for his powers, and his high public purposes. He had won greatly on the confidence of the King. He had just received a fresh mark of honour from him; a few days before he had been raised a step in the peerage, and he was now Viscount St. Alban's. With Buckingham he seemed to be on terms of the most affectionate familiarity, exchanging opinions freely with him on every subject. And Parliament met in good humour. They voted money at once. One of the matters which interested Bacon most—the revision of the Statute Book—they took up as one of their first measures, and appointed a Select Committee to report upon it. And what, amid the apparent felicity of the time, was of even greater personal happiness to Bacon, the first step of the “Great Instauration” had been

taken. During the previous autumn, Oct. 12, 1620, the *Novum Organum*, the first instalment of his vast design, was published, the result of the work of thirty years; and copies were distributed to great people, among others to Coke. He apprehended no evil; he had nothing to fear, and much to hope from the times.

His sudden and unexpected fall, so astonishing and so irreparably complete, is one of the strangest events of that still imperfectly comprehended time. There had been, and were still to be, plenty of instances of the downfall of power, as ruinous and even more tragic; though scarcely any one more pathetic in its surprise and its shame. But it is hard to find one of which so little warning was given, and the causes of which are at once in part so clear, and in part so obscure and unintelligible. Such disasters had to be reckoned upon as possible chances by any one who ventured into public life. Montaigne advises that the discipline of pain should be part of every boy's education, for the reason that every one in his day might be called upon to undergo the torture. And so every public man, in the England of the Tudors and Stuarts, entered on his career with the perfectly familiar expectation of possibly closing it, it might be in an honourable and ceremonious fashion, in the Tower and on the scaffold; just as he had to look forward to the possibility of closing it by smallpox or the plague. So that when disaster came, though it might be unexpected as death is unexpected, it was a turn of things which ought not to take a man by surprise. But some premonitory signs usually gave warning. There was nothing to warn Bacon that the work which he believed he was doing so well would be interrupted.



We look in vain for any threatenings of the storm. What the men of his time thought and felt about Bacon it is not easy to ascertain. Appearances are faint and contradictory ; he himself, though scornful of judges who sought to be "popular," believed that he "came in with the favour of the general ;" that he "had a little popular reputation, which followeth me, whether I will or no." No one, for years, had discharged the duties of his office with greater efficiency. Scarcely a trace remains of any suspicion, previous to the attack upon him, of the justice of his decisions ; no instance was alleged that, in fact, impure motives had controlled the strength and lucidity of an intellect which loved to be true and right for the mere pleasure of being so. Nor was there anything in Bacon's political position to make him specially obnoxious above all others of the King's Council. He maintained the highest doctrines of prerogative ; but they were current doctrines, both at the Council board and on the bench ; and they were not discredited nor extinguished by his fall. To be on good terms with James and Buckingham meant a degree of subservience which shocks us now ; but it did not shock people then, and he did not differ from his fellows in regarding it as part of his duty as a public servant of the Crown. No doubt he had enemies—some with old grudges like Southampton, who had been condemned with Essex ; some like Suffolk, smarting under recent reprimands and the biting edge of Bacon's tongue ; some, like Coke, hating him from constitutional antipathies and the strong antagonism of professional doctrines, for a long course of rivalry, and for mortifying defeats. But there is no appearance of preconcerted efforts among them to bring about his overthrow. He

did not, at the time, seem to be identified with anything dangerous or odious. There was no doubt a good deal of dissatisfaction with Chancery—among the common lawyers, because it interfered with their business; in the public, partly from the traditions of its slowness, partly from its expensiveness, partly because being intended for special redress of legal hardship it was sure to disappoint one party to a suit. But Bacon thought that he had reformed Chancery. He had also done a great deal to bring some kind of order, or at least hopefulness of order, into the King's desperate finances. And he had never set himself against Parliament. On the contrary, he had always been forward to declare that the King could not do without Parliament, and that Parliament only needed to be dealt with generously, and as "became a King," to be not a danger and hindrance to the Crown, but its most sincere and trustworthy support.

What was then to portend danger to Bacon when the Parliament of 16 $\frac{2}{21}$  met? The House of Commons at its meeting was thoroughly loyal and respectful; it meant to be *benedictum et pacificum parliamentum*. Every one knew that there would be "grievances" which would not be welcome to the Court; but they did not seem likely to touch him. Every one knew that there would be questions raised about unpopular patents and oppressive monopolies, and about their legality; and it was pretty well agreed upon at Court, that they should be given up as soon as complained of. But Bacon was not implicated more than the Crown lawyers before him, in what all the Crown lawyers had always defended. There was dissatisfaction about the King's extravagance and wastefulness, about his indecision in

the cause of the Elector Palatine, about his supposed intrigues with Papistical and tyrannical Spain; but Bacon had nothing to do with all this except, as far as he could, to give wise counsel and warning. The person who made the King despised and hated was the splendid and insolent favourite, Buckingham. It might have been thought that the one thing to be set against much that was wrong in the State was the just and enlightened and speedy administration of equity in the Chancery.

When Parliament met, though nothing seemed to threaten mischief, it met with a sturdy purpose of bringing to account certain delinquents whose arrogance and vexations of the subjects had provoked the country, and who were supposed to shelter themselves under the countenance of Buckingham. Michell and Mompesson were rascals whose misdemeanours might well try the patience of a less spirited body than an English House of Commons. Buckingham could not protect them, and hardly tried to do so. But just as one electric current "induces" another by neighbourhood, so all this deep indignation against Buckingham's creatures created a fierce temper of suspicion about corruption all through the public service. Two Committees were early appointed by the House of Commons; one a Committee on Grievances, such as the monopolies; the other, a Committee to inquire into abuses in the Courts of Justice and receive petitions about them. In the course of the proceedings, the question arose in the House as to the authorities or "Referees" who had certified to the legality of the Crown patents or grants which had been so grossly abused; and among these "referees" were the Lord Chancellor and other high officers, both legal and political.

It was the little cloud. But lookers-on like Chamberlain did not think much of it. "The referees," he wrote on Feb. 29, "who certified the legality of the patents are glanced at, but they are chiefly above the reach of the House; they attempt so much that they will accomplish little." Coke, who was now the chief leader in Parliament, began to talk ominously of precedents, and to lay down rules about the power of the House to punish—rules which were afterwards found to have no authority for them. Cranfield, the representative of severe economy, insisted that the honour of the King required that the referees, whoever they were, should be called to account. The gathering clouds shifted a little, when the sense of the House seemed to incline to giving up all retrospective action, and to a limitation for the future by statute of the questionable prerogative—a limitation which was in fact attempted by a bill thrown out by the Lords. But they gathered again when the Commons determined to bring the whole matter before the House of Lords. The King wrote to warn Bacon of what was coming. The proposed conference was staved off by management for a day or two; but it could not be averted: and the Lords showed their eagerness for it. And two things by this time, the beginning of March, seemed now to have become clear, first, that under the general attack on the referees was intended a blow against Bacon; next, that the person whom he had most reason to fear was Sir Edward Coke.

The storm was growing; but Bacon was still unalarmed, though Buckingham had been frightened into throwing the blame on the referees.



"I do hear," he writes to Buckingham (dating his letter on March 7, 'the day I received the seal'), "from divers of judgement, that to-morrow's conference is like to pass in a calm, as to the referees. Sir Lionel Cranfield, who hath been formerly the trumpet, said yesterday, that he did now incline unto Sir John Walter's opinion and motion not to have the referees meddled with, otherwise than to discount it from the King; and so not to look back, but to the future. And I do hear almost all men of judgement in the house wish now that way. I woo nobody; I do but listen, and I have doubt only of Sir Edward Coke, who I wish had some round *caveat* given him from the King: for your Lordship hath no great power with him. But a word from the King mates him."

But Coke's opportunity had come. The House of Commons was disposed for gentler measures. But he was able to make it listen to his harsher counsels, and from this time his hand appears in all that was done. The first conference was a tame and dull one. The spokesmen had been slack in their disagreeable and perhaps dangerous duty. But Coke and his friends took them sharply to task. "The heart and tongue of Sir Edward Coke are true relations," said one of his fervent supporters; "but his pains hath not reaped that harvest of praise that he hath deserved. For the Referees, they are as transcendent delinquents as any other, and sure their souls made a wilful elopement from their bodies when they made these certificates." A second conference was held with the Lords, and this time the charge was driven home. The referees were named, the Chancellor at the head of them. When Bacon rose to explain and justify his acts, he was sharply stopped, and reminded that he was transgressing the orders of the House in speaking till the Committees were named to examine the matter. What was even more important, the King had come to the House of



Lords (March 10), and frightened, perhaps, about his subsidies, told them "that he was not guilty of those grievances which are now discovered, but that he grounded his judgement upon others who have misled him." The referees would be attacked, people thought, if the Lower House had courage.

All this was serious. As things were drifting, it seemed as if Bacon might have to fight the legal question of the prerogative in the form of a criminal charge, and be called upon to answer the accusation of being the minister of a crown which legal language pronounced absolute, and of a King who interpreted legal language to the letter; and further, to meet his accusers after the King himself had disavowed what his servant had done. What passed between Bacon and the King is confused and uncertain; but after his speech the King could scarcely have thought of interfering with the inquiry. The proceedings went on; Committees were named for the several points of inquiry; and Bacon took part in these arrangements. It was a dangerous position to have to defend himself against an angry House of Commons, led and animated by Coke and Cranfield. But though the storm had rapidly thickened, the charges against the referees were not against him alone. His mistake in law, if it was a mistake, was shared by some of the first lawyers and first councillors in England. There was a battle before him, but not a hopeless one. "*Modicæ fidei, quare dubitasti,*" he writes about this time to an anxious friend.

But in truth the thickening storm had been gathering over his head alone. It was against him that the whole attack was directed; as soon as it took a different

shape, the complaints against the other referees, such as the Chief-Justice, who was now Lord Treasurer, though some attempt was made to press them, were quietly dropped. What was the secret history of these weeks we do not know. But the result of Bacon's ruin was that Buckingham was saved. "As they speak of the Turquoise stone in a ring," Bacon had said to Buckingham, when he was made Chancellor, "I will break into twenty pieces, before you have the least fall." Without knowing what he pledged himself to, he was taken at his word.

At length the lightning fell. During the early part of March, while these dangerous questions were mooted about the referees, a Committee, appointed early in the session, had also been sitting on abuses in courts of justice, and as part of their business, an inquiry had been going on into the ways of the subordinate officers of the Court of Chancery. Bacon had early (Feb. 17) sent a message to the Committee courting full inquiry, "willingly consenting that any man might speak anything of his Court." On the 12th of March the chairman, Sir R. Philips, reported that he had in his hands "divers petitions, many frivolous and clamorous, many of weight and consequence." Cranfield, who presided over the Court of Wards, had quarrelled fiercely with the Chancery, where he said there was "neither Law, Equity, or Conscience," and pressed the inquiry, partly, it may be, to screen his own Court, which was found fault with by the lawyers. Some scandalous abuses were brought to light in the Chancery. They showed that "Bacon was at fault in the art of government," and did not know how to keep

his servants in order. One of them, John Churchill, an infamous forger of Chancery orders, finding things going hard with him, and "resolved," it is said, "not to sink alone," offered his confessions of all that was going on wrong in the Court. But on the 15th of March things took another turn. It was no longer a matter of doubtful constitutional law ; no longer a question of slack discipline over his officers. To the astonishment, if not of the men of his own day, at least to the unexhausted astonishment of times following, a charge was suddenly reported from the Committee to the Commons against the Lord Chancellor, not of straining the prerogative, or of conniving at his servants' misdoings, but of being himself a corrupt and venal judge. Two suitors charged him with receiving bribes. Bacon was beginning to feel worried and anxious, and he wrote thus to Buckingham. At length he had begun to see the meaning of all these inquiries, and to what they were driving.

"MY VERY GOOD LORD—Your Lordship spake of Purgatory. I am now in it, but my mind is in a calm ; for my fortune is not my felicity. I know I have clean hands and a clean heart ; and I hope a clean house for friends or servants. But Job himself, or whosoever was the justest judge, by such hunting for matters against him as hath been used against me, may for a time seem foul, specially in a time when greatness is the mark, and accusation is the game. And if this be to be a Chancellor, I think if the great seal lay upon Hounslow Heath, nobody would take it up. But the King and your Lordship will, I hope, put an end to these miseries one way or other. And in troth that which I fear most is lest continual attendance and business, together with these cares, and want of time to do my weak body right this spring by diet and physie, will cast me down ; and then it will be thought feigning or fainting. But I hope in God I shall hold out. God prosper you."

The first charges attracted others, which were made formal matters of complaint by the House of Commons. John Churchill, to save himself, was busy setting down cases of misdoing; and probably suitors of themselves became ready to volunteer evidence. But of this Bacon as yet knew nothing. He was at this time only aware that there were persons who were "hunting out complaints against him," that the attack was changed from his law to his private character; he had found an unfavourable feeling in the House of Lords: and he knew well enough what it was to have powerful enemies in those days when a sentence was often settled before a trial. To any one, such a state of things was as formidable as the first serious symptoms of a fever. He was uneasy, as a man might well be, on whom the House of Commons had fixed its eye, and to whom the House of Lords had shown itself unfriendly. But he was as yet conscious of nothing fatal to his defence, and he knew that if false accusations could be lightly made they could also be exposed.

A few days after the first mention of corruption the Commons laid their complaints of him before the House of Lords, and on the same day (March 19), Bacon, finding himself too ill to go to the House, wrote to the Peers by Buckingham, requesting them that as some "complaints of base bribery" had come before them, they would give him a fair opportunity of defending himself, and of cross-examining witnesses; especially begging, that considering the number of decrees which he had to make in a year, more than two thousand, and "the courses which had been taken in hunting out complaints against him," they would not let their opinion of



him be affected by the mere number of charges that might be made. Their short verbal answer, moved by Southampton (March 20), that they meant to proceed by right rule of justice, and would be glad if he cleared his honour, was not encouraging. And now that the Commons had brought the matter before them, the Lords took it entirely into their own hands, appointing three Committees, and examining the witnesses themselves. New witnesses came forward every day with fresh cases of gifts and presents, "bribes," received by the Lord Chancellor. When Parliament rose for the Easter vacation (March 27—April 17), the Committees continued sitting. A good deal probably passed of which no record remains. When the Commons met again (April 17) Coke was full of gibes about *Instauratio Magna*; the true *Instauratio* was to restore laws; and two days after an Act was brought in for review and reversal of decrees in Courts of Equity. It was now clear that the case against Bacon had assumed formidable dimensions, and also a very strange, and almost monstrous shape. For the Lords, who were to be the judges, had by their Committees taken the matter out of the hands of the Commons, the original accusers, and had become themselves the prosecutors, collecting and arranging evidence, accepting or rejecting depositions, and doing all that counsel or the committing magistrate would do preliminary to a trial. There appears to have been no cross-examining of witnesses on Bacon's behalf, or hearing witnesses for him; not unnaturally at this stage of business, when the prosecutors were engaged in making out their own case; but considering that the future judges had of their own accord turned themselves into



the prosecutors, the unfairness was great. At the same time it does not appear that Bacon did anything to watch how things went in the Committees, which had his friends in them as well as his enemies, and are said to have been open courts. Towards the end of March Chamberlain wrote to Carleton that "the Houses were working hard at cleansing out the Augæan stable of monopolies, and also extortions in Courts of Justice. The petitions against the Lord Chancellor were too numerous to be got through: his chief friends and brokers of bargains, Sir George Hastings, and Sir Richard Young, and others attacked, are obliged to accuse him in their own defence, though very reluctantly. His ordinary bribes were £300, £400, and even £1000. . . . The Lords admit no evidence except on oath. One Churchill, who was dismissed from the Chancery Court for extortion, is the chief cause of the Chancellor's ruin."<sup>1</sup> Bacon was greatly alarmed. He wrote to Buckingham, who was "his anchor in these floods." He wrote to the King; he was at a loss to account for the "tempest that had come on him": he could not understand what he had done to offend the country or Parliament: he had never "taken rewards to pervert justice, however he might be frail, and partake of the abuse of the time."

"Time hath been when I have brought unto you *gemitum columbæ* from others. Now I bring it from myself. I fly unto your Majesty with the wings of a dove, which once within these seven days I thought would have carried me a higher flight.

"When I enter into myself, I find not the materials of such a tempest as is comen upon me. I have been (as your Majesty knoweth best), never author of any immoderate counsel, but always desired to have things carried *suavibus modis*. I have been no

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<sup>1</sup> *Calendar of State Papers* (domestic), March 24, 1621.

avaricious oppressor of the people. I have been no haughty or intolerable or hateful man, in my conversation or carriage. I have inherited no hatred from my father, but am a good patriot born. Whence should this be? For these are the things that use to raise dislikes abroad."

And he ended by entreating the King to help him :

"That which I thirst after, as the hart after the streams, is that I may know by my matchless friend [Buckingham] that presenteth to you this letter, your Majesty's heart (which is an *abyssus* of goodness, as I am an *abyssus* of misery) towards me. I have been ever your man, and counted myself but an usufructuary of myself, the property being yours : and now making myself an oblation to do with me as may best conduce to the honour of your justice, the honour of your mercy, and the use of your service, resting as

"Clay in your Majesty's gracious hands,

"FR. ST. ALBAN, Canc.

"March 25, 1621."

To the world he kept up an undismayed countenance : he went down to Gorhambury, attended by troops of friends. "This man," said Prince Charles, when he met his company, "scorns to go out like a snuff." But at Gorhambury he made his will, leaving "his name to the next ages, and to foreign nations ;" and he wrote a prayer, which is a touching evidence of his state of mind :—

"Most gracious Lord God, my merciful Father, from my youth up, my Creator, my Redeemer, my Comforter. Thou (O Lord) soundest and searchest the depths and secrets of all hearts ; thou knowledgest the upright of heart, thou judgest the hypocrite, thou ponderest men's thoughts and doings as in a balance, thou measurest their intentions as with a line, vanity and crooked ways cannot be hid from thee.

"Remember (O Lord) how thy servant hath walked before thee ; remember what I have first sought, and what hath been principal in mine intentions. I have loved thy assemblies, I have mourned for the divisions of thy Church, I have delighted in the

brightness of thy sanctuary. This vine which thy right hand hath planted in this nation, I have ever prayed unto thee that it might have the first and the latter rain ; and that it might stretch her branches to the seas and to the floods. The state and bread of the poor and oppressed have been precious in my eyes : I have hated all cruelty and hardness of heart ; I have (though in a despised weed) procured the good of all men. If any have been mine enemies, I thought not of them ; neither hath the sun almost set upon my displeasure ; but I have been as a dove, free from superfluity of maliciousness. Thy creatures have been my books, but thy Scriptures much more. I have sought thee in the courts, fields, and gardens, but I have found thee in thy temples.

“Thousand have been my sins, and ten thousand my transgressions ; but thy sanctifications have remained with me, and my heart, through thy grace, hath been an unquenched coal upon thy altar. O Lord, my strength, I have since my youth met with thee in all my ways, by thy fatherly compassions, by thy comfortable chastisements, and by thy most visible providence. As thy favours have increased upon me, so have thy corrections ; so as thou hast been alway near me, O Lord ; and ever as my worldly blessings were exalted, so secret darts from thee have pierced me ; and when I have ascended before men, I have descended in humiliation before thee.

“And now when I thought most of peace and honour, thy hand is heavy upon me, and hath humbled me, according to thy former loving-kindness, keeping me still in thy fatherly school, not as a bastard, but as a child. Just are thy judgements upon me for my sins, which are more in number than the sands of the sea, but have no proportion to thy mercies ; for what are the sands of the sea, to the sea, earth, heavens ? and all these are nothing to thy mercies.

“Besides my innumerable sins, I confess before thee that I am debtor to thee for the gracious talent of thy gifts and graces, which I have misspent in things for which I was least fit ; so as I may truly say, my soul hath been a stranger in the course of my pilgrimage. Be merciful unto me (O Lord) for my Saviour’s sake, and receive me into thy bosom, or guide me in thy ways.”

Bacon up to this time, strangely, if the Committees

were "open Courts," was entirely ignorant of the particulars of the charge which was accumulating against him. He had an interview with the King, which was duly reported to the House, and he placed his case before James, distinguishing between the "three cases of bribery supposed in a judge—a corrupt bargain ; carelessness in receiving a gift while the cause is going on ; and, what is innocent, receiving a gift after it is ended." And he meant in such words as these to place himself at the King's disposal, and ask his direction :—

"For my fortune, *summa summarum* with me is, that I may not be made altogether unprofitable to do your Majesty service or honour. If your Majesty continue me as I am, I hope I shall be a new man, and shall reform things out of feeling, more than another can do out of example. If I cast part of my burden, I shall be more strong and *delivré* to bear the rest. And, to tell your Majesty what my thoughts run upon, I think of writing a story of England, and of recompiling of your laws into a better digest."

The King referred him to the House ; and the House now (April 19) prepared to gather up into "one brief" the charges against the Lord Chancellor, still, however, continuing open to receive fresh complaints.

Meanwhile the chase after abuses of all kinds was growing hotter in the Commons—abuses in patents and monopolies, which revived the complaints against referees, among whom Bacon was frequently named, and abuses in the Courts of Justice. The attack passed by and spared the Common Law Courts, as was noticed in the course of the debates ; it spared Cranfield's Court, the Court of Wards. But it fell heavily on the Chancery and the Ecclesiastical Courts. "I have neither power



nor will to defend Chancery," said Sir John Bennett, the judge of the Prerogative Court; but a few weeks after his turn came, and a series of as ugly charges as could well be preferred against a judge, charges of extortion as well as bribery, were reported to the House by its Committee. There can be no doubt of the grossness of many of these abuses, and the zeal against them was honest, though it would have shown more courage if it had flown at higher game; but the daily discussion of them helped to keep alive and inflame the general feeling against so great a "delinquent" as the Lord Chancellor was supposed to be. And, indeed, two of the worst charges against him were made before the Commons. One was a statement made in the House by Sir George Hastings, a member of the House, who had been the channel of Awbry's gift, that when he had told Bacon that if questioned he must admit it, Bacon's answer was: "George, if you do so, I must deny it upon my honour—upon my oath." The other was that he had given an opinion in favour of some claim of the Masters in Chancery for which he received £1200, and with which he said that all the judges agreed—an assertion which all the judges denied. Of these charges there is no contradiction.<sup>1</sup>

Bacon made one more appeal to the King (April 21). He hoped that, by resigning the seal, he might be spared the sentence:—

"But now if not *per omnipotentiam* (as the divines speak), but *per potestatem suaviter disponentem*, your Majesty will graciously save me from a sentence with the good liking of the House, and that cup may pass from me; it is the utmost of my desires.

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<sup>1</sup> *Commons' Journals*, March 17, April 27; iii. 560, 594-6.

“This I move with the more belief, because I assure myself that if it be reformation that is sought, the very taking away the seal, upon my general submission, will be as much in example for these four hundred years, as any furdur severity.”

At length, informally, but for the first time distinctly, the full nature of the accusation, with its overwhelming list of cases, came to Bacon's knowledge (April 20 or 21). From the single charge, made in the middle of March, it had swelled in force and volume like a rising mountain torrent. That all these charges should have sprung out of the ground from their long concealment is strange enough. How is it that nothing was heard of them when the things happened? And what is equally strange is that these charges were substantially true and undeniable; that this great Lord Chancellor, so admirable in his despatch of business, hitherto so little complained of for wrong or unfair decisions, had been in the habit of receiving large sums of money from suitors, in some cases certainly while the suit was pending. And further, while receiving them, while perfectly aware of the evil of receiving gifts on the seat of judgment, while emphatically warning inferior judges against yielding to the temptation, he seems really to have continued unconscious of any wrong-doing while gift after gift was offered and accepted. But nothing is so strange as the way in which Bacon met the charges. Tremendous as the accusation was, he made not the slightest fight about it. Up to this time he had held himself innocent. Now, overwhelmed and stunned, he made no attempt at defence; he threw up the game without a struggle, and volunteered an absolute and unreserved confession of his guilt—that is to say, he declined to stand his trial.

Only, he made an earnest application to the House of Lords, in proceeding to sentence, to be content with a general admission of guilt, and to spare him the humiliation of confessing the separate facts of alleged "bribery" which were contained in the twenty-eight articles of his accusation. This submission, "grounded only on rumour," for the Articles of charge had not yet been communicated to him by the accusers, took the House by surprise. "No Lord spoke to it, after it had been read, for a long time." But they did not mean that he should escape with this. The House treated the suggestion with impatient scorn (April 24). "It is too late," said Lord Saye. "No word of confession of any corruption in the Lord Chancellor's submission," said Southampton; "it stands with the justice and honour of this House not to proceed without the parties' particular confession, or to have the parties to hear the charge, and we to hear the parties answer." The demand of the Lords was strictly just, but cruel; the Articles were now sent to him; he had been charged with definite offences; he must answer yes or no, confess them or defend himself. A further question arose whether he should not be sent for to appear at the bar. He still held the seals. "Shall the Great Seal come to the bar?" asked Lord Pembroke. It was agreed that he was to be asked whether he would acknowledge the particulars. His answer was "that he will make no manner of defence to the charge, but meaneth to acknowledge corruption, and to make a particular confession to every point, and after that a humble submission. But he humbly craves liberty that, when the charge is more full than he finds the truth of the fact, he

may make a declaration of the truth in such particulars, the charge being brief and containing not all the circumstances." And such a confession he made. "My Lords," he said, to those who were sent to ask whether he would stand to it, "it is my act, my hand, my heart. I beseech your Lordships be merciful to a broken reed." This was of course followed by a request to the King from the House to "sequester" the Great Seal. A commission was sent to receive it (May 1). "The worse, the better," he answered to the wish "that it had been better with him." "By the King's great favour I received the Great Seal; by my own great fault I have lost it." They intended him now to come to the bar to receive his sentence. But he was too ill to leave his bed. They did not push this point farther, but proceeded to settle the sentence (May 3). He had asked for mercy, but he did not get it. There were men who talked of every extremity short of death. Coke, indeed, in the Commons, from his store of precedents, had cited cases where judges had been hanged for bribery. But the Lords would not hear of this. "His offences foul," said Lord Arundel; "his confession pitiful. Life not to be touched." But Southampton, whom twenty years before he had helped to involve in Essex's ruin, urged that he should be degraded from the peerage; and asked whether, at any rate, "he whom this House thinks unfit to be a constable shall come to the Parliament." He was fined £40,000. He was to be imprisoned in the Tower during the King's pleasure. He was to be incapable of any office, place, or employment in the State or Commonwealth. He was never to sit in Parliament or come within the verge of the Court. This was agreed to,



Buckingham only dissenting. "The Lord Chancellor is so sick," he said, "that he cannot live long."

What is the history of this tremendous catastrophe by which, in less than two months, Bacon was cast down from the height of fortune to become a byword of shame? He had enemies, who certainly were glad, but there is no appearance that it was the result of any plot or combination against him. He was involved, accidentally, it may almost be said, in the burst of anger excited by the intolerable dealings of others. The indignation provoked by Michell and Mompesson and their associates at that particular moment found Bacon in its path, doing, as it seemed, in his great seat of justice, even worse than they; and when he threw up all attempt at defence, and his judges had his hand to an unreserved confession of corruption, both generally, and in the long list of cases alleged against him, it is not wonderful that they came to the conclusion, as the rest of the world did, that he was as bad as the accusation painted him—a dishonest and corrupt judge. Yet it is strange that they should not have observed that not a single charge of a definitely unjust decision was brought, at any rate was proved, against him. He had taken money, they argued, and therefore he must be corrupt; but if he had taken money to pervert judgment, some instance of the iniquity would certainly have been brought forward and proved. There is no such instance to be found; though, of course, there were plenty of dissatisfied suitors; of course the men who had paid their money and lost their cause were furious. But in vain do we look for any case of proved injustice. The utmost that can be said is that in some cases he showed favour in pushing forward and expedit-

ing suits. So that the real charge against Bacon assumes, to us who have not to deal practically with dangerous abuses, but to judge conduct and character, a different complexion. Instead of being the wickedness of perverting justice and selling his judgments for bribes, it takes the shape of allowing and sharing in a dishonourable and mischievous system of payment for service, which could not fail to bring with it temptation and discredit, and in which fair reward could not be distinguished from unlawful gain. Such a system it was high time to stop; and in this rough and harsh way, which also satisfied some personal enmities, it was stopped. We may put aside for good the charge on which he was condemned, and which in words he admitted, of being corrupt as a judge. His real fault, and it was a great one, was that he did not in time open his eyes to the wrongness and evil, patent to every one, and to himself as soon as pointed out, of the traditional fashion in his court of eking out by irregular gifts the salary of such an office as his.

Thus Bacon was condemned both to suffering and to dishonour; and, as has been observed, condemned without a trial. But it must also be observed, that it was entirely owing to his own act that he had not a trial, and with a trial the opportunity of cross-examining witnesses and of explaining openly the matters urged against him. The proceedings in the Lords were preliminary to the trial: when the time came, Bacon, of his own choice, stopped them from going further by his confession and submission. Considering the view which he claimed to take of his own case, his behaviour was wanting in courage and spirit. From the moment that the attack

on him shifted from a charge of authorising illegal monopolies to a charge of personal corruption, he never fairly met his accusers. The distress and anxiety, no doubt, broke down his health ; and twice, when he was called upon to be in his place in the House of Lords, he was obliged to excuse himself on the ground that he was too ill to leave his bed. But between the time of the first charge and his condemnation seven weeks elapsed : and though he was able to go down to Gorhambury, he never in that time showed himself in the House of Lords. Whether or not, while the Committees were busy in collecting the charges, he would have been allowed to take part, to put questions to the witnesses, or to produce his own, he never attempted to do so ; and by the course he took there was no other opportunity. To have stood his trial could hardly have increased his danger, or aggravated his punishment ; and it would only have been worthy of his name and place, if not to have made a fight for his character and integrity, at least to have bravely said what he had made up his mind to admit, and what no one could have said more nobly and pathetically, in open Parliament. But he was cowed at the fierceness of the disapprobation, manifest in both Houses. He shrunk from looking his peers and his judges in the face. His friends obtained for him that he should not be brought to the bar, and that all should pass in writing. But they saved his dignity at the expense of his substantial reputation. The observation that the charges against him were not sifted by cross-examination applies equally to his answers to them. The allegations of both sides would have come down to us in a more trustworthy shape if the case had gone on. But to give

up the struggle, and to escape by any humiliation from a regular public trial, seems to have been his only thought, when he found that the King and Buckingham could not or would not save him.

But the truth is that he knew that a trial of this kind was a trial only in name. He knew that when a charge of this sort was brought, it was not meant to be really investigated in open court, but to be driven home by proofs carefully prepared beforehand, against which the accused had little chance. He knew, too, that in those days to resist in earnest an accusation was apt to be taken as an insult to the court which entertained it. And further, for the prosecutor to accept a submission and confession without pushing to the formality of a public trial, and therefore a public exposure, was a favour. It was a favour which by his advice, as against the King's honour, had been refused to Suffolk; it was a favour which, in a much lighter charge, had by his advice been refused to his colleague Yelverton only a few months before, when Bacon, in sentencing him, took occasion to expatiate on the heinous guilt of misprisions or mistakes in men in high places. The humiliation was not complete without the trial, but it was for humiliation and not fair investigation that the trial was wanted. Bacon knew that the trial would only prolong his agony, and give a further triumph to his enemies.

That there was any plot against Bacon, and much more that Buckingham to save himself was a party to it, is of course absurd. Buckingham, indeed, was almost the only man in the Lords who said anything for Bacon, and, alone, he voted against his punishment. But considering what Buckingham was, and what he dared to do



when he pleased, he was singularly cool in helping Bacon. Williams, the astute Dean of Westminster, who was to be Bacon's successor as Lord Keeper, had got his ear, and advised him not to endanger himself by trying to save delinquents. He did not. Indeed, as the inquiry went on, he began to take the high moral ground ; he was shocked at the Chancellor's conduct ; he would not have believed that it could have been so bad ; his disgrace was richly deserved. Buckingham kept up appearances by saying a word for him from time to time in Parliament, which he knew would be useless, and which he certainly took no measures to make effective. It is sometimes said that Buckingham never knew what dissimulation was. He was capable, at least, of the perfidy and cowardice of utter selfishness. Bacon's conspicuous fall diverted men's thoughts from the far more scandalous wickedness of the great favourite. But though there was no plot, though the blow fell upon Bacon almost accidentally, there were many who rejoiced to be able to drive it home. We can hardly wonder that foremost among them was Coke. This was the end of the long rivalry between Bacon and Coke, from the time that Essex pressed Bacon against Coke in vain, to the day when Bacon as Chancellor drove Coke from his seat for his bad law, and as Privy Councillor ordered him to be prosecuted in the Star Chamber for riotously breaking open men's doors to get his daughter. The two men thoroughly disliked and undervalued one another. Coke made light of Bacon's law. Bacon saw clearly Coke's narrowness and ignorance out of that limited legal sphere in which he was supposed to know everything, his prejudiced and interested use of his knowledge, his coarse-

ness and insolence. But now in Parliament Coke was supreme, "our Hercules," as his friends said. He posed as the enemy of all abuses and corruption. He brought his unrivalled though not always accurate knowledge of law and history to the service of the Committees, and took care that the Chancellor's name should not be forgotten when it could be connected with some bad business of patent or Chancery abuse. It was the great revenge of the Common Law on the encroaching and insulting Chancery which had now proved so foul. And he could not resist the opportunity of marking the revenge of professional knowledge over Bacon's airs of philosophical superiority. "To restore things to their original" was his sneer in Parliament, "this, *Instauratio Magna. Instaurare paras :—Instaura leges justitiamque prius.*"<sup>1</sup>

The charge of corruption was as completely a surprise to Bacon as it was to the rest of the world. And yet, as soon as the blot was hit, he saw in a moment that his position was hopeless—he knew that he had been doing wrong; though all the time he had never apparently given it a thought, and he insisted, what there is every reason to believe, that no present had induced him to give an unjust decision. It was the power of custom over a character naturally and by habit too pliant to

<sup>1</sup> *Commons' Journals*, iii. 578. In his copy of the *Novum Organum*, received *ex dono auctoris*, Coke wrote the same words.

"*Auctori consilium.*

*Instaurare paras veterum documenta sophorum :*

*Instaura leges justitiamque prius."*

He added, with allusion to the ship in the frontispiece of the *Novum Organum*,

"It deserveth not to be read in schools,  
But to be freighted in the ship of Fools."

circumstances. Custom made him insensible to the evil of receiving recommendations from Buckingham in favour of suitors. Custom made him insensible to the evil of what it seems every one took for granted,—receiving gifts from suitors. In the Court of James I. the atmosphere which a man in office breathed was loaded with the taint of gifts and bribes. Presents were as much the rule, as indispensable for those who hoped to get on, as they are now in Turkey. Even in Elizabeth's days, when Bacon was struggling to win her favour, and was in the greatest straits for money, he borrowed £500 to buy a jewel for the Queen. When he was James's servant the giving of gifts became a necessity. New Year's Day brought round its tribute of gold vases and gold pieces to the King and Buckingham. And this was the least. Money was raised by the sale of offices and titles. For £20,000, having previously offered £10,000 in vain, the Chief-Justice of England, Montague, became Lord Mandeville and Treasurer. The bribe was sometimes disguised: a man became a Privy Councillor, like Cranfield, or a Chief-Justice, like Ley (afterwards "the good Earl," "unstained with gold or fee," of Milton's Sonnet), by marrying a cousin or a niece of Buckingham. When Bacon was made a Peer, he had also given him "the making of a Baron"; that is to say, he might raise money by bargaining with some one who wanted a peerage; when, however, later on, he asked Buckingham for a repetition of the favour, Buckingham gave him a lecture on the impropriety of prodigality, which should make it seem that "while the King was asking money of Parliament with one hand he was giving with the other." How things were in

Chancery in the days of the Queen, and of Bacon's predecessors, we know little; but Bacon himself implies that there was nothing new in what he did. "All my lawyers," said James, "are so bred and nursed in corruption that they cannot leave it." Bacon's Chancellorship coincided with the full bloom of Buckingham's favour: and Buckingham set the fashion, beyond all before him, of extravagance in receiving and in spending. Encompassed by such assumptions and such customs, Bacon administered the Chancery. Suitors did there what people did everywhere else; they acknowledged by a present the trouble they gave, or the benefit they gained. It may be that Bacon's known difficulties about money, his expensive ways and love of pomp, his easiness of nature, his lax discipline over his servants, encouraged this profuseness of giving. And Bacon let it be. He asked no questions; he knew that he worked hard and well; he knew that it could go on without affecting his purpose to do justice "from the greatest to the groom." A stronger character, a keener conscience, would have faced the question, not only whether he was not setting the most ruinous of precedents, but whether any man could be so sure of himself as to go on dealing justly with gifts in his hands. But Bacon, who never dared to face the question, what James was, what Buckingham was, let himself be spell-bound by custom. He knew in the abstract that judges ought to have nothing to do with gifts, and had said so impressively in his charges to them. Yet he went on self-complacent, secure, almost innocent, building up a great tradition of corruption in the very heart of English justice, till the challenge of Parliament, which began in him its terrible



and relentless but most unequal prosecution of justice against ministers who had betrayed the commonwealth in serving the Crown, woke him from his dream, and made him see, as others saw it, the guilt of a great judge who, under whatever extenuating pretext, allowed the suspicion to arise that he might sell justice. "In the midst of a state of as great affliction as mortal man can endure," he wrote to the Lords of the Parliament, in making his submission,—"I shall begin with the professing gladness in some things. The first is that hereafter the greatness of a judge or magistrate shall be no sanctuary or protection of guiltiness, which is the beginning of a golden world. The next, that after this example it is like that judges will fly from anything that is in the likeness of corruption as from a serpent." Bacon's own judgment on himself, deliberately repeated, is characteristic, and probably comes near the truth. "Howsoever I acknowledge the sentence just and for reformation's sake fit," he writes to Buckingham from the Tower, where, for form's sake, he was imprisoned for a few miserable days, he yet had been "the justest Chancellor that hath been in the five changes that have been since Sir Nicolas Bacon's time." He repeated the same thing yet more deliberately in later times. "*I was the justest judge that was in England these fifty years. But it was the justest censure in Parliament that was these two hundred years.*"

He might have gone on to add, "the Wisest Counsellor; and yet none on whom rested heavier blame; none of whom England might more justly complain." Good counsels given, submissive acquiescence in the worst,—this is the history of his statesmanship. Bacon, whose eye was everywhere, was not sparing of

his counsels. On all the great questions of the time he has left behind abundant evidence, not only of what he thought, but of what he advised. And in every case these memorials are marked with the insight, the independence, the breadth of view, and the moderation of a mind which is bent on truth. He started, of course, from a basis which we are now hardly able to understand or allow for, the idea of absolute royal power and prerogative which James had enlarged and hardened out of the Kingship of the Tudors, itself imperious and arbitrary enough, but always seeking, with a tact of which James was incapable, to be in touch and sympathy with popular feeling. But it was a basis which in principle every one of any account as yet held or professed to hold, and which Bacon himself held on grounds of philosophy and reason. He could see no hope for orderly and intelligent government except in a ruler whose wisdom had equal strength to assert itself; and he looked down with incredulity and scorn on the notion of anything good coming out of what the world then knew or saw of popular opinion or parliamentary government. But when it came to what was wise and fitting for absolute power to do, in the way of general measures and policy, he was for the most part right. He saw the inexorable and pressing necessity of putting the finance of the kingdom on a safe footing. He saw the necessity of a sound and honest policy in Ireland. He saw the mischief of the Spanish alliance in spite of his curious friendship with Gondomar, and detected the real and increasing weakness of the Spanish monarchy, which still awed mankind. He saw the growing danger of abuses in Church and State which were left untouched, and

were protected by the punishment of those who dared to complain of them. He saw the confusion and injustice of much of that common law of which the lawyers were so proud ; and would have attempted, if he had been able, to emulate Justinian, and anticipate the Code Napoleon, by a rational and consistent digest. Above all, he never ceased to impress on James the importance, and, if wisely used, the immense advantages, of his Parliaments. Himself, for great part of his life, an active and popular member of the House of Commons, he saw that not only it was impossible to do without it, but that if fairly, honourably, honestly dealt with, it would become a source of power and confidence which would double the strength of the Government both at home and abroad. Yet of all this wisdom nothing came. The finance of the kingdom was still ruined by extravagance and corruption in a time of rapidly-developing prosperity and wealth. The wounds of Ireland were unhealed. It was neither peace nor war with Spain, and hot infatuation for its friendship alternated with cold fits of distrust and estrangement. Abuses flourished and multiplied under great patronage. The King's one thought about Parliament was how to get as much money out of it as he could, with as little other business as possible. Bacon's counsels were the prophecies of Cassandra in that so prosperous but so disastrous reign. All that he did was to lend the authority of his presence, in James's most intimate counsels, to policy and courses of which he saw the unwisdom and the perils. James and Buckingham made use of him when they wanted. But they would have been very different in their measures and their statesmanship if they had listened to him.

Mirabeau said, what of course had been said before him, "*On ne vaut, dans la partie exécutive de la vie humaine, que par le caractère.*" This is the key to Bacon's failures as a judge and as a statesman; and why, knowing so much more and judging so much more wisely than James and Buckingham, he must be identified with the misdoings of that ignoble reign. He had the courage of his opinions, but a man wants more than that; he needs the manliness and the public spirit to enforce them, if they are true and salutary. But this is what Bacon had not. He did not mind being rebuffed; he knew that he was right, and did not care. But to stand up against the King, to contradict him after he had spoken, to press an opinion or a measure on a man whose belief in his own wisdom was infinite, to risk not only being set down as a dreamer, but the King's displeasure, and the ruin of being given over to the will of his enemies, this Bacon had not the fibre, or the stiffness, or the self-assertion to do. He did not do what a man of firm will and strength of purpose, a man of high integrity, of habitual resolution, would have done. Such men insist when they are responsible, and when they know that they are right; and they prevail, or accept the consequences. Bacon, knowing all that he did, thinking all that he thought, was content to be the echo and the instrument of the cleverest, the foolishlest, the vainest, the most pitifully unmanly of English kings.



## CHAPTER VII.

### BACON'S LAST YEARS—1621-1626.

THE tremendous sentences of those days, with their crushing fines, were often worse in sound than in reality. They meant that for the moment a man was defeated and disgraced. But it was quite understood that it did not necessarily follow that they would be enforced in all their severity. The fine might be remitted; the imprisonment shortened; the ban of exclusion taken off. At another turn of events or caprice, the man himself might return to favour, and take his place in Parliament or the Council, as if nothing had happened. But, of course, a man might have powerful enemies, and the sentence might be pressed. His fine might be assigned to some favourite; and he might be ruined, even if in the long run he was pardoned; or he might remain indefinitely a prisoner. Raleigh had remained to perish at last in dishonour. Northumberland, Raleigh's fellow-prisoner, after fifteen years' captivity, was released this year. The year after Bacon's condemnation such criminals as Lord and Lady Somerset were released from the Tower, after a six years' imprisonment. Southampton, the accomplice of Essex, Suffolk, sentenced as late as 1619 by Bacon for embezzlement, sat in the House of Peers which judged Bacon,

and both of them took a prominent part in judging him.

To Bacon the sentence was ruinous. It proved an irretrievable overthrow as regards public life, and though some parts of it were remitted, and others lightened, it plunged his private affairs into trouble which weighed heavily on him for his few remaining years. To his deep distress and horror he had to go to the Tower to satisfy the terms of his sentence. "Good my Lord," he writes to Buckingham, May 31, "procure my warrant for my discharge this day. Death is so far from being unwelcome to me, as I have called for it as far as Christian resolution would permit any time these two months. But to die before the time of his Majesty's grace, in this disgraceful place, is even the worst that could be." He was released after two or three days, and he thanks Buckingham (June 4) for getting him out to do him and the King faithful service—"wherein, by the grace of God, your Lordship shall find that my adversity hath neither *spent* nor *pent* my spirits." In the autumn his fine was remitted; that is, it was assigned to persons nominated by Bacon, who, as the Crown had the first claim on all his goods, served as a protection against his other creditors, who were many and some of them clamorous; and it was followed by his pardon. His successor, Williams, now Bishop of Lincoln, who stood in great fear of Parliament, tried to stop the pardon. The assignment of the fine, he said to Buckingham, was a gross job: "it is much spoken against, not for the matter (for no man objects to that), but for the manner, which is full of knavery, and a wicked precedent. For by this assignment he is protected from all his

creditors, which (I dare say) was neither his Majesty's nor your Lordship's meaning." It was an ill-natured and cowardly piece of official pedantry, to plunge deeper a drowning man: but in the end the pardon was passed. It does not appear whether Buckingham interfered to overrule the Lord Keeper's scruples. Buckingham was certainly about this time very much out of humour with Bacon, for a reason which, more than anything else, discloses the deep meanness which lurked under his show of magnanimity and pride. He had chosen this moment to ask Bacon for York House. This meant that Bacon would never more want it. Even Bacon was stung by such a request to a friend in his condition, and declined to part with it: and Buckingham accordingly was offended, and made Bacon feel it. Indeed, there is reason to think with Mr. Spedding that for the sealing of his pardon Bacon was indebted to the good offices with the King, not of Buckingham, but of the Spaniard, Gondomar, with whom Bacon had always been on terms of cordiality and respect, and who at this time certainly "brought about something on his behalf, which his other friends either had not dared to attempt, or had not been able to obtain."

But though Bacon had his pardon, he had not received permission to come within the verge of the Court, which meant that he could not live in London. His affairs were in great disorder, his health was bad, and he was cut off from books. He wrote an appeal to the Peers who had condemned him, asking them to intercede with the King for the enlargement of his liberty. "I am old," he wrote, "weak, ruined, in want, a very subject of pity." The Tower at least gave

him the neighbourhood of those who could help him. "There I could have company, physicians, conference with my creditors and friends about my debts and the necessities of my estate, helps for my studies and the writings I have in hand. Here I live upon the sword-point of a sharp air, endangered if I go abroad, dulled if I stay within, solitary and comfortless, without company, banished from all opportunities to treat with any to do myself good, and to help out my wrecks." If the Lords would recommend his suit to the King, "You shall do a work of charity and nobility, you shall do me good, you shall do my creditors good, and it may be you shall do posterity good, if out of the carcase of dead and rotten greatness (as out of Samson's lion) there may be honey gathered for the use of future times." But Parliament was dissolved before the touching appeal reached them; and Bacon had to have recourse to other expedients. He consulted Selden about the technical legality of the sentence. He appealed to Buckingham, who vouchsafed to appear more placable. Once more he had recourse to Gondomar, "in that solitude of friends, which is the base-court of adversity," as a man whom he had "observed to have the magnanimity of his own nation, and the cordiality of ours, and I am sure, the wit of both,"—and who had been equally kind to him in "both his fortunes"; and he proposed through Gondomar to present Gorhambury to Buckingham "for nothing," as a peace-offering. But the purchase of his liberty was to come in another way. Bacon had reconciled himself to giving up York House; but now Buckingham would not have it: he had found another house, he said, which suited him as well. That



is to say, he did not now choose to have York House from Bacon himself; but he meant to have it. Accordingly, Buckingham let Bacon know through a friend of Bacon's, Sir Edward Sackville, that the price of his liberty to live in London was the cession of York House—not to Buckingham, but of all men in the world, to Lionel Cranfield, the man who had been so bitter against Bacon in the House of Commons. This is Sir Edward Sackville's account to Bacon of his talk with Buckingham; it is characteristic of every one concerned:—

“In the forenoon he laid the law, but in the afternoon he preached the gospel; when, after some revivations of the old distaste concerning York House, he most nobly opened his heart unto me; wherein I read that which augured much good towards you. After which revelation the book was again sealed up, and must in his own time only by himself be again manifested unto you. I have leave to remember some of the vision, and am not forbidden to write it. He vowed (not court like), but constantly to appear your friend so much, as if his Majesty should abandon the care of you, you should share his fortune with him. He pleased to tell me how much he had been beholden to you, how well he loved you, how unkindly he took the denial of your house (for so he will needs understand it); but the close for all this was harmonious, since he protested he would seriously begin to study your ends, now that the world should see he had no ends on you. He is in hand with the work, and therefore will by no means accept of your offer, though I can assure you the tender hath much won upon him, and mellowed his heart towards you, and your genius directed you aright when you writ that letter of denial to the Duke. The King saw it, and all the rest, which made him say unto the Marquis, you played an after-game well; and that now he had no reason to be much offended.

“I have already talked of the Revelation, and now am to speak in apocalyptical language, which I hope you will rightly comment: whereof if you make difficulty, the bearer can help you with the key of the cypher.

“My Lord Falkland by this time hath showed you London from

Highgate. *If York House were gone, the town were yours*, and all your straitest shackles clean off, besides more comfort than the city air only. The Marquis would be exceeding glad the Treasurer had it. This I know; yet this you must not know from me. Bargain with him presently, upon as good conditions as you can procure, so you have direct motion from the Marquis to let him have it. Seem not to dive into the secret of it, though you are purblind if you see not through it. I have told Mr. Meautys how I would wish your Lordship now to make an end of it. From him I beseech you take it, and from me only the advice to perform it. If you part not speedily with it, you may defer the good which is approaching near you, and disappointing other aims (which must either shortly receive content or never), perhaps anew yield matter of discontent, though you may be indeed as innocent as before. Make the Treasurer believe that since the Marquis will by no means accept of it, and that you must part with it, you are more willing to pleasure him than anybody else, because you are given to understand my Lord Marquis so inclines; which inclination, if the Treasurer shortly send unto you about it, desire may be more clearly manifested than as yet it hath been; since as I remember none hitherto hath told you *in terminis terminantibus* that the Marquis desires you should gratify the Treasurer. I know that way the hare runs, and that my Lord Marquis longs until Cranfield hath it; and so I wish too, for your good; yet would not it were absolutely passed until my Lord Marquis did send or write unto you to let him have it; for then his so disposing of it were but the next degree removed from the immediate acceptance of it, and your Lordship freed from doing it otherwise than to please him, and to comply with his own will and way."

It need hardly be said that when Cranfield got it, it soon passed into Buckingham's hands. "Bacon consented to part with his house, and Buckingham in return consented to give him his liberty." Yet Bacon could write to him, "low as I am, I had rather sojourn in a college in Cambridge than recover a good fortune by any other but yourself." "As for York House," he bids Toby Matthews to let Buckingham know, "that *whether in a*

*straight line or a compass line*, I meant it for his Lordship, in the way which I thought might please him best." But liberty did not mean either money or recovered honour. All his life long he had made light of being in debt; but since his fall this was no longer a condition easy to bear. He had to beg some kind of pension of the King. He had to beg of Buckingham; "a small matter for my debts would do me more good now than double a twelvemonth hence. I have lost six thousand by the year, besides caps and courtesies. Two things I may assure your Lordship. The one, that I shall lead such a course of life as whatsoever the King doth for me shall rather sort to his Majesty's and your Lordship's honour than to envy: the other, that whatsoever men talk, I can play the good husband, and the King's bounty shall not be lost."

It might be supposed from the tone of these applications that Bacon's mind was bowed down and crushed by the extremity of his misfortune. Nothing could be farther from the truth. In his behaviour during his accusation there was little trace of that high spirit and fortitude shown by far inferior men under like disasters. But the moment the tremendous strain of his misfortunes was taken off, the vigour of his mind recovered itself. The buoyancy of his hopefulness, the elasticity of his energy, are as remarkable as his profound depression. When the end was approaching his thoughts turned at once to other work to be done, ready in plan, ready to be taken up and finished. At the close of his last desperate letter to the King he cannot resist finishing at once with a jest, and with the prospect of two great literary undertakings—

"This is my last suit which I shall make to your Majesty in this business, prostrating myself at your mercy seat, after fifteen years service, wherein I have served your Majesty in my poor endeavours with an entire heart, and, as I presumed to say unto your Majesty, am still a virgin for matters that concern your person and crown ; and now only craving that after eight steps of honour I be not precipitated altogether. But because he that hath taken bribes is apt to give bribes, I will go further, and present your Majesty with a bribe. For if your Majesty will give me peace and leisure, and God give me life, I will present your Majesty with a good history of England, and a better digest of your laws."

The Tower did, indeed, to use a word of the time, "mate" him. But the moment he was out of it, his quick and fertile mind was immediately at work in all directions, reaching after all kinds of plans, making proof of all kinds of expedients to retrieve the past, arranging all kinds of work according as events might point out the way. His projects for history, for law, for philosophy, for letters, occupy quite as much of his thoughts, as his pardon and his debts ; and they, we have seen, occupied a good deal. If he was pusillanimous in the moment of the storm, his spirit, his force, his varied interests, returned the moment the storm was past. His self-reliance, which was boundless, revived. He never allowed himself to think, however men of his own time might judge him, that the future world would mistake him. "*Aliquis fui inter vivos*," he writes to Gondomar, "*neque omnino intermoriar apud posteros*." Even in his time he did not give up the hope of being restored to honour and power. He compared himself to Demosthenes, to Cicero, to Seneca, to Marcus Livius, who had been condemned for corrupt dealings as he had been, and had all recovered favour and position. Lookers-on were puzzled and shocked. "He has,"



writes Chamberlain, "no manner of feeling of his fall, but continuing vain and idle in all his humours as when he was at the highest." "I am said," Bacon himself writes, "to have a feather in my head."

Men were mistaken. His thoughts were, for the moment, more than ever turned to the future; but he had not given up hope of having a good deal to say yet to the affairs of the present. Strangely enough, as it seems to us, in the very summer after that fatal spring of 1621 the King called for his opinion concerning the reformation of Courts of Justice; and Bacon, just sentenced for corruption and still unpardoned, proceeds to give his advice as if he were a Privy Counsellor in confidential employment. Early in the following year he, according to his fashion, surveyed his position, and drew up a paper of memoranda, like the notes of the *Commentarius Solutus* of 1608, about points to be urged to the King at an interview. Why should not the King employ him again? "Your Majesty never chid me;" and as to his condemnation, "as the fault was not against your Majesty, so my fall was not your act." "Therefore," he goes on, "if your Majesty do at any time find it fit for your affairs to employ me publicly upon the stage, I shall so live and spend my time as neither discontinuance shall disable me nor adversity shall discourage me, nor anything that I do give any new scandal or envy upon me." He insists very strongly that the King's service never miscarried in his hands, for he simply carried out the King's wise counsels. "That his Majesty's business never miscarried in my hands I do not impute to any extraordinary ability in myself, but to my freedom from any particular, either

friends or ends, and my careful receipt of his directions, being, as I have formerly said to him, but as a bucket and cistern to that fountain—a bucket to draw forth, a cistern to preserve.” He is not afraid of the apparent slight to the censure passed on him by Parliament. “For envy, it is an almanack of the old year, and as a friend of mine said, *Parliament died penitent towards me.*” “What the King bestows on me will be further seen than on Paul’s steeple.” “There be mountebanks, as well in the civil body, as in the natural ; I ever served his Majesty with modesty ; no shouting, no undertaking.” In the odd fashion of the time, a fashion in which no one more delighted than himself, he lays hold of sacred words to give point to his argument.

“I may allude to the three petitions of the Litany—*Libera nos Domine ; parce nobis, Domine ; exaudi nos, Domine.* In the first, I am persuaded that his Majesty had a mind to do it, and could not conveniently in respect of his affairs. In the second, he hath done it in my fine and pardon. In the third, he hath likewise performed, in restoring to the light of his countenance.”

But if the King did not see fit to restore him to public employment, he would be ready to give private counsel ; and he would apply himself to any “literary province” that the King appointed. “I am like ground fresh. If I be left to myself I will graze and bear natural philosophy ; but if the King will plough me up again, and sow me with anything, I hope to give him some yield.” “Your Majesty hath power ; I have faith. Therefore a miracle may be wrought.” And he proposes, for matters in which his pen might be useful, first, as “active” works, the recompiling of laws ; the disposing of wards, and generally the education of youth ; the

regulation of the jurisdiction of Courts ; and the regulation of Trade : and for "contemplative," the continuation of the history of Henry VIII. ; a general treatise *de Legibus et Justitia* ; and the "Holy War," against the Ottomans.

When he wrote this he had already shown what his unquelled energy could accomplish. In the summer and autumn after his condemnation, amid all the worries and inconveniences of that time, moving about from place to place, without his books, and without free access to papers and records, he had written his *History of Henry VII.* The theme had, no doubt, been long in his head. But the book was the first attempt at philosophical history in the language, and it at once takes rank with all that the world had yet seen, in classical times and more recently in Italy, of such history. He sent the book, among other persons, to the Queen of Bohemia, with a phrase, the translation of a trite Latin commonplace, which may have been the parent of one which became famous in our time ; and with an expression of absolute confidence in the goodness of his own work.

"I have read in books that it is accounted a great bliss for a man to have *Leisure with Honour*. That was never my fortune. For time was, I had Honour without Leisure ; and now I have *Leisure without Honour*. . . . But my desire is now to have *Leisure without Loitering*, and not to become an abbey-lubber, as the old proverb was, but to yield some fruit of my private life. . . . If King Henry were alive again, I hope verily he would not be so angry with me for not flattering him, as well pleased in seeing himself so truly described in colours that will last and be believed."

But the tide had turned against him for good. A few

fair words, a few grudging doles of money to relieve his pressing wants, and those sometimes intercepted and perhaps never rightly granted from an Exchequer which even Cranfield's finance could not keep filled, were all the graces that descended upon him from those fountains of goodness in which he professed to trust with such boundless faith. The King did not want him, perhaps did not trust him, perhaps did not really like him. When the *Novum Organum* came out all that he had to say about it was in the shape of a profane jest that "it was like the peace of God—it passed all understanding." Other men had the ear of Buckingham; shrewd practical men of business like Cranfield, who hated Bacon's loose and careless ways, or the clever ecclesiastic Williams, whose counsel had steered Buckingham safely through the tempest that wrecked Bacon, and who, with no legal training, had been placed in Bacon's seat. "I thought," said Bacon, "that I should have known my successor." Williams, for his part, charged Bacon with trying to cheat his creditors, when his fine was remitted. With no open quarrel, Bacon's relations to Buckingham became more ceremonious and guarded; the "My singular good Lord" of the former letters becomes, now that Buckingham had risen so high and Bacon had sunk so low, "Excellent Lord." The one friend to whom Bacon had once wished to owe everything, had become the great man, now only to be approached with "sweet meats" and elaborate courtesy. But it was no use. His full pardon Bacon did not get, though earnestly suing for it, that he might not "die in ignominy." He never sat again in Parliament. The Provostship of Eton fell vacant, and Bacon's hopes were kindled. "It were a pretty cell for my fortune.



The College and School I do not doubt but I shall make to flourish." But Buckingham had promised it to some nameless follower, and by some process of exchange it went to Sir Henry Wotton. His English history was offered in vain. His digest of the Laws was offered in vain. In vain he wrote a memorandum on the regulation of usury; notes of advice to Buckingham; elaborate reports and notes of speeches about a war with Spain, when that for a while loomed before the country. In vain he affected an interest which he could hardly have felt in the Spanish marriage, and the escapade of Buckingham and Prince Charles, which "began," he wrote, "like a fable of the poets, but deserved all in a piece a worthy narration." In vain, when the Spanish marriage was off and the French was on, he proposed to offer to Buckingham "his service to live a summer as upon mine own delight at Paris, to settle a fast intelligence between France and us;" "I have somewhat of the French," he said, "I love birds, as the King doth." Public patronage and public employment were at an end for him. His petitions to the King and Buckingham ceased to be for office, but for the clearing of his name, and for the means of living. It is piteous to read the earnestness of his requests. "Help me (dear Sovereign lord and master), pity me so far as that I who have borne a bag be not now in my age forced in effect to bear a wallet." The words are from a carefully-prepared and rhetorical letter which was not sent, but they express what he added to a letter presenting the *De Augmentis*; "*det Vestra Majestas obolum Belisario.*" Again, "I prostrate myself at your Majesty's feet; I your ancient servant, now sixty-four years old in age, and three years and five months old in misery.

I desire not from your Majesty means, nor place, nor employment, but only after so long a time of expiation, a complete and total remission of the sentence of the Upper House, to the end that blot of ignominy may be removed from me and from my memory and posterity, that I die not a condemned man, but may be to your Majesty, as I am to God, *nova creatura*." But the pardon never came. Sir John Bennett, who had been condemned as a corrupt judge by the same Parliament, and between whose case and Bacon's there was as much difference, "I will not say as between black and white, but as between black and grey," had got his full pardon, "and they say shall sit in Parliament." Lord Suffolk had been one of Bacon's judges. "I hope I deserve not to be the only outcast." But whether the Court did not care, or whether, as he once suspected, there was some old enemy like Coke, who "had a tooth against him," and was watching any favour shown him, he died without his wish being fulfilled, "to live out of want and to die out of ignominy."

Bacon was undoubtedly an impoverished man, and straitened in his means; but this must be understood as in relation to the rank and position which he still held, and the work which he wanted done for the *Instauratio*. His will, dated a few months before his death, shows that it would be a mistake to suppose that he was in penury. He no doubt often wanted ready money, and might be vexed by creditors. But he kept a large household, and was able to live in comfort at Gray's Inn or at Gorhambury. A man who speaks in his will of his "four coach geldings and his best caroache," besides many legacies, and who proposes to found two

lectures at the universities, may have troubles about debts and be cramped in his expenditure; but it is only relatively to his station that he can be said to be poor. And to subordinate officers of the Treasury who kept him out of his rights, he could still write a sharp letter, full of his old force and edge. A few months before his death he thus wrote to the Lord Treasurer Ley, who probably had made some difficulty about a claim for money :—

“MY LORD—I humbly entreat your Lordship, and (if I may use the word) advise your Lordship to make me a better answer. Your Lordship is interested in honour, in the opinion of all that hear how I am dealt with. If your Lordship malice me for Long’s cause, surely it was one of the justest businesses that ever was in Chancery. I will avouch it; and how deeply I was tempted therein, your Lordship knoweth best. Your Lordship may do well to think of your grave as I do of mine; and to beware of hardness of heart. And as for fair words, it is a wind by which neither your Lordship nor any man else can sail long. Howsoever, I am the man that shall give all due respects and reverence to your great place.

“20th June 1625.

FR. ST. ALBAN.”

Bacon always claimed that he was not “vindicative.” But considering how Bishop Williams, when he was Lord Keeper, had charged Bacon with “knavery” and “deceiving his creditors” in the arrangements about his fine, it is not a little strange to find that at the end of his life Bacon had so completely made friends with him that he chose him as the person to whom he meant to leave his speeches and letters, which he was “willing should not be lost,” and also the charge of superintending two foundations of £200 a year for Natural Science at the universities. And the Bishop accepted the charge.

The end of this, one of the most pathetic of histories,

was at hand ; the end was not the less pathetic because it came in so homely a fashion. On a cold day in March, he stopped his coach in the snow on his way to Highgate, to try the effect of cold in arresting putrefaction. He bought a hen from a woman by the way, and stuffed it with snow. He was taken with a bad chill, which forced him to stop at a strange house, Lord Arundel's, to whom he wrote his last letter, a letter of apology for using his house. He did not write the letter as a dying man. But disease had fastened on him. A few days after, early on Easter morning, April 9th, 1626, he passed away. He was buried at St. Albans, in the Church of St. Michael, "the only Christian church within the walls of old Verulam." "For my name and memory," he said in his will, "I leave it to men's charitable speeches, and to foreign nations, and the next ages." So he died : the brightest, richest, largest mind but one, in the age which had seen Shakespeare and his fellows ; so bright and rich and large that there have been found those who identify him with the writer of *Hamlet* and *Othello*. That is idle. Bacon could no more have written the plays than Shakespeare could have prophesied the triumphs of natural philosophy. So ended a career, than which no other in his time had grander and nobler aims, aims, however mistaken, for the greatness and good of England, aims for the enlargement of knowledge and truth, and for the benefit of mankind. So ended a career which had mounted slowly and painfully, but resolutely, to the highest pinnacle of greatness, greatness full of honour and beneficent activity, suddenly to plunge down to depths where honour and hope were irrecoverable. So closed, in disgrace and disappointment and neglect, the



last sad chapter of a life which had begun so brightly, which had achieved such permanent triumphs, which had lost itself so often in the tangles of insincerity and evil custom, which was disfigured and marred by great misfortunes and still more by great mistakes of his own, which was in many ways misunderstood not only by his generation but by himself, but which he left in the constant and almost unaccountable faith that it would be understood and greatly honoured by posterity. With all its glories, it was the greatest shipwreck, the greatest tragedy, of an age which saw many.

But in these gloomy and dreary days of depression and vain hope to which his letters bear witness—"three years and five months old in misery," again later, "a long cleansing week of five years' expiation and more"—his interest in his great undertaking and his industry never flagged. The King did not want what he offered, did not want his histories, did not want his help about law. Well, then, he had work of his own on which his heart was set; and if the King did not want his time, he had the more for himself. Even in the busy days of his Chancellorship he had prepared and carried through the press the *Novum Organum*, which he published on the very eve of his fall. It was one of those works which quicken a man's powers, and prove to him what he can do; and it had its effect. His mind was never more alert than in these years of adversity, his labour never more indefatigable, his powers of expression never more keen and versatile and strong. Besides the political writings of grave argument for which he found time, these five years teem with the results of work. In the year before his death he sketched out once more, in a letter to a

Venetian correspondent, Fra Fulgenzio, the friend of Sarpi, the plan of his great work, on which he was still busy, though with fast diminishing hopes of seeing it finished. To another foreign correspondent, a professor of philosophy at Annecy, and a distinguished mathematician, Father Baranzan, who had raised some questions about Bacon's method, and had asked what was to be done with metaphysics, he wrote in eager acknowledgment of the interest which his writings had excited, and insisting on the paramount necessity, above everything, of the observation of facts and of natural history, out of which philosophy may be built. But the most comprehensive view of his intellectual projects in all directions, "the fullest account of his own personal feelings and designs as a writer which we have from his own pen," is given in a letter to the venerable friend of his early days, Bishop Andrewes, who died a few months after him. Part, he says, of his *Instauratio*, "the work in mine own judgement (*si nunquam fallit imago*) I do most esteem," has been published: but because he "doubts that it flies too high over men's heads," he proposes "to draw it down to the sense" by examples of Natural History. He has enlarged and translated the *Advancement* into the *De Augmentis*. "Because he could not altogether desert the civil person that he had borne," he had begun a work on Laws, intermediate between philosophical jurisprudence and technical law. He had hoped to compile a digest of English law, but found it more than he could do alone, and had laid it aside. The *Instauratio* had contemplated the good of men "in the dowries of nature:" the *Laws*, their good "in society and the dowries of government." As he owed duty to his

country, and could no longer do it service, he meant to do it honour by his history of Henry VII. His *Essays* were but "recreations"; and remembering that all his writings had hitherto "gone all into the City and none into the Temple," he wished to make "some poor oblation," and therefore had chosen an argument mixed of religious and civil considerations, the dialogue of "an Holy War" against the Ottoman, which he never finished, but which he intended to dedicate to Andrewes, "in respect of our ancient and private acquaintance, and because amongst the men of our times I hold you in special reverence."

The question naturally presents itself, in regard to a friend of Bishop Andrewes, what was Bacon as regards religion? And the answer, it seems to me, can admit of no doubt. The obvious and superficial thing to say is that his religion was but an official one, a tribute to custom and opinion. But it was not so. Both in his philosophical thinking, and in the feelings of his mind in the various accidents and occasions of life, Bacon was a religious man, with a serious and genuine religion. His sense of the truth and greatness of religion was as real as his sense of the truth and greatness of nature; they were interlaced together, and could not be separated, though they were to be studied separately and independently. The call, repeated through all his works from the earliest to the last, *Da Fidei quæ Fidei sunt*, was a warning against confusing the two, but was an earnest recognition of the claims of each. The solemn religious words in which his prefaces and general statements often wind up with thanksgiving and hope and prayer, are no mere words of course; they breathe the

spirit of the deepest conviction. It is true that he takes the religion of Christendom as he finds it. The grounds of belief, the relation of faith to reason, the profounder inquiries into the basis of man's knowledge of the Eternal and Invisible, are out of the circle within which he works. What we now call the philosophy of religion is absent from his writings. In truth, his mind was not qualified to grapple with such questions. There is no sign in his writings that he ever tried his strength against them ; that he ever cared to go below the surface into the hidden things of mind and what mind deals with above and beyond sense—those metaphysical difficulties and depths, as we call them, which there is no escaping, and which are as hard to explore and as dangerous to mistake as the forces and combinations of external nature. But it does not follow, because he had not asked all the questions that others have asked, that he had not thought out his reasonable faith. His religion was not one of mere vague sentiment ; it was the result of reflection and deliberate judgment. It was the discriminating and intelligent Church of England religion of Hooker and Andrewes, which had gone back to something deeper and nobler in Christianity than the popular Calvinism of the earlier Reformation ; and though sternly hostile to the system of the Papacy, both on religious and political grounds, attempted to judge it with knowledge and justice. This deliberate character of his belief is shown in the remarkable Confession of Faith which he left behind him : a closely-reasoned and nobly-expressed survey of Christian theology—"a *summa theologiæ*, digested into seven pages of the finest English of the days when its tones were finest." "The



entire scheme of Christian theology," as Mr. Spedding says, "is constantly in his thoughts ; underlies everything ; defines for him the limits of human speculation ; and, as often as the course of inquiry touches at any point the boundary line, never fails to present itself. There is hardly any occasion or any kind of argument into which it does not at one time or another incidentally introduce itself." Doubtless it was a religion which in him was compatible, as it has been in others, with grave faults of temperament and character. But it is impossible to doubt that it was honest, that it elevated his thoughts, that it was a refuge and stay in the times of trouble.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### BACON'S PHILOSOPHY.

BACON was one of those men to whom posterity forgives a great deal, for the greatness of what he has done and attempted for posterity. It is idle, unless all honest judgment is foregone, to disguise the many deplorable shortcomings of his life ; it is unjust to have one measure for him, and another for those about him and opposed to him. But it is not too much to say that in temper, in honesty, in labour, in humility, in reverence, he was the most perfect example that the world had yet seen of the student of nature, the enthusiast for knowledge. That such a man was tempted and fell, and suffered the Nemesis of his fall, is an instance of the awful truth embodied in the tragedy of *Faust*. But his genuine devotion, so unwearied and so paramount, to a great idea and a great purpose for the good of all generations to come, must shield him from the insult of Pope's famous and shallow epigram. Whatever may have been his sins, and they were many, he cannot have been the "meanest of mankind," who lived and died, holding unaltered, amid temptations and falls, so noble a conception of the use and calling of his life : the duty and service of helping his brethren to know as they had

never yet learned to know. That thought never left him ; the obligations it imposed were never forgotten in the crush and heat of business ; the toils, thankless at the time, which it heaped upon him in addition to the burdens of public life, were never refused. Nothing diverted him, nothing made him despair. He was not discouraged because he was not understood. There never was any one in whose life the "*Souveraineté du but*" was more certain and more apparent ; and that object was the second greatest that man can have. To teach men to know is only next to making them good.

The Baconian philosophy, the reforms of the *Novum Organum*, the method of experiment and induction, are commonplaces, and sometimes lead to a misconception of what Bacon did. Bacon is, and is not, the founder of modern science. What Bacon believed could be done, what he hoped and divined, for the correction and development of human knowledge, was one thing ; what his methods were, and how far they were successful is another. It would hardly be untrue to say that though Bacon is the parent of modern science, his methods contributed nothing to its actual discoveries ; neither by possibility could they have done so. The great and wonderful work which the world owes to him was in the idea, and not in the execution. The idea was that the systematic and wide examination of facts was the first thing to be done in science, and that till this had been done faithfully and impartially, with all the appliances and all the safeguards that experience and forethought could suggest, all generalisations, all anticipations from mere reasoning, must be adjourned and postponed ; and further, that sought on these conditions,

knowledge, certain and fruitful, beyond all that men then imagined, could be attained. His was the faith of the discoverer, the imagination of the poet, the voice of the prophet. But his was not the warrior's arm, the engineer's skill, the architect's creativeness. "I only sound the clarion," he says, "but I enter not into the battle;" and, with a Greek quotation very rare with him, he compares himself to one of Homer's peaceful heralds, *χαίρετε κήρυκες, Δίος ἄγγελοι ἡδὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν*. Even he knew not the full greatness of his own enterprise. He underrated the vastness and the subtlety of nature. He overrated his own appliances to bring it under his command. He had not that incommunicable genius and instinct of the investigator which in such men as Faraday close hand to hand with phenomena. His weapons and instruments wanted precision; they were powerful up to a certain point, but they had the clumsiness of an unpractised time. Cowley compared him to Moses on Pisgah surveying the promised land; it was but a distant survey, and Newton was the Joshua who began to take possession of it.

The idea of the great enterprise, in its essential outline, and with a full sense of its originality and importance, was early formed, and was even sketched on paper with Bacon's characteristic self-reliance when he was but twenty-five. Looking back, in a letter written in the last year of his life, on the ardour and constancy with which he had clung to his faith—"in that purpose my mind never waxed old, in that long interval of time it never cooled"—he remarks that it was then "forty years since he put together a youthful essay on these matters, which with vast confidence I



called by the high-sounding title, *The Greatest Birth of Time.*" The "*Greatest Birth of Time*," whatever it was, has perished, though the name, altered to "*Partus Temporis Masculus*," has survived, attached to some fragments of uncertain date and arrangement. But in very truth the child was born, and, as Bacon says, for forty years grew and developed, with many changes yet the same. Bacon was most tenacious, not only of ideas, but even of the phrases, images, and turns of speech in which they had once flashed on him and taken shape in his mind. The features of his undertaking remained the same from first to last, only expanded and enlarged as time went on and experience widened; his conviction that the knowledge of nature, and with it the power to command and to employ nature, were within the capacity of mankind and might be restored to them; the certainty that of this knowledge men had as yet acquired but the most insignificant part, and that all existing claims to philosophical truth were as idle and precarious as the guesses and traditions of the vulgar; his belief that no greater object could be aimed at than to sweep away once and for ever all this sham knowledge and all that supported it, and to lay an entirely new and clear foundation to build on for the future; his assurance that, as it was easy to point out with fatal and luminous certainty the rottenness and hollowness of all existing knowledge and philosophy, so it was equally easy to devise and practically apply new and natural methods of investigation and construction, which should replace it by knowledge of infallible truth and boundless fruitfulness. His object,—to gain the key to the interpretation of nature; his method,—to gain it, not by the

means common to all previous schools of philosophy, by untested reasonings and imposing and high-sounding generalisations, but by a series and scale of rigorously verified inductions, starting from the lowest facts of experience to discoveries which should prove and realise themselves by leading deductively to practical results—these, in one form or another, were the theme of his philosophical writings from the earliest sight of them that we gain.

He had disclosed what was in his mind in the letter to Lord Burghley, written when he was thirty-one (1590), in which he announced that he had “taken all knowledge for his province,” to “purge it of ‘frivolous disputations’ and ‘blind experiments,’ and that whatever happened to him, he meant to be a ‘true pioner in the mine of truth.’” But the first public step in the opening of his great design was the publication in the autumn of 1605 of the *Advancement of Learning*, a careful and balanced report on the existing stock and deficiencies of human knowledge. His endeavours, as he says in the *Advancement* itself, are “but as an image in a cross-way, that may point out the way, but cannot go it.” But from this image of his purpose, his thoughts greatly widened, as time went on. The *Advancement*, in part at least, was probably a hurried work. It shadowed out, but only shadowed out, the lines of his proposed reform of philosophical thought; it showed his dissatisfaction with much that was held to be sound and complete, and showed the direction of his ideas and hopes. But it was many years before he took a further step. Active life intervened. In 1620, at the height of his prosperity, on the eve of his fall, he published

the long meditated *Novum Organum*, the avowed challenge to the old philosophies, the engine and instrument of thought and discovery which was to put to shame and supersede all others, containing, in part at least, the principles of that new method of the use of experience which was to be the key to the interpretation and command of nature, and, together with the method, an elaborate but incomplete exemplification of its leading processes. Here were summed up, and stated with the most solemn earnestness, the conclusions to which long study and continual familiarity with the matters in question had led him. And with the *Novum Organum* was at length disclosed, though only in outline, the whole of the vast scheme in all its parts, object, method, materials, results, for the "Instauration" of human knowledge, the restoration of powers lost, disused, neglected, latent, but recoverable by honesty, patience, courage, and industry.

The *Instauratio*, as he planned the work, "is to be divided," says Mr. Ellis, "into six portions, of which the *first* is to contain a general survey of the present state of knowledge. In the *second*, men are to be taught how to use their understanding aright in the investigation of nature. In the *third*, all the phenomena of the universe are to be stored up as in a treasure-house, as the materials on which the new method is to be employed. In the *fourth*, examples are to be given of its operation and of the results to which it leads. The *fifth* is to contain what Bacon had accomplished in natural philosophy *without* the aid of his own method; *ex eodem intellectus usu quem alii in inquirendo et inveniando adhibere consueverunt*. It is therefore less important than the rest, and Bacon declares that he will not bind himself to the conclusions which it contains. Moreover, its value will altogether cease when the *sixth* part can be completed, wherein will be set forth the new philosophy—the results of the application of the new method to all the

phenomena of the universe. But to complete this, the last part of the *Instauratio*, Bacon does not hope; he speaks of it as a thing, *et supra vires et ultra spes nostras collocata.*"—*Works*, i. 71.

The *Novum Organum*, itself imperfect, was the crown of all that he lived to do. It was followed (1622) by the publication, intended to be periodical, of materials for the new philosophy to work upon, particular sections and classes of observations on phenomena—the *History of the Winds*, the *History of Life and Death*. Others were partly prepared but not published by him. And finally, in 1623, he brought out in Latin a greatly enlarged recasting of the *Advancement*; the nine books of the "*De Augmentis*." But the great scheme was not completed: portions were left more or less finished. Much that he purposed was left undone, and could not have been yet done at that time.

But the works which he published represent imperfectly the labour spent on the undertaking. Besides these, there remains a vast amount of unused or rejected work, which shows how it was thought out, rearranged, tried first in one fashion and then in another, recast, developed. Separate chapters, introductions, "experimental essays and discarded beginnings," treatises with picturesque and imaginative titles, succeeded one another in that busy workshop; and these first draughts and tentative essays have in them some of the freshest and most felicitous forms of his thoughts. At one time his enterprise, connecting itself with his own life and mission, rose before his imagination and kindled his feelings, and embodied itself in the lofty and stately "Proem" already quoted. His quick and brilliant imagination saw shadows and figures of his ideas in the ancient mythology, which



he worked out with curious ingenuity and often much poetry, in his *Wisdom of the Ancients*. Towards the end of his life he began to embody his thoughts and plans in a philosophical tale, which he did not finish, the *New Atlantis*, a charming example of his graceful fancy and of his power of easy and natural story-telling. Between the *Advancement* and the *Novum Organum* (1605-20) much underground work had been done. "He had finally (about 1607) settled the plan of the *Great Instauration*, and began to call it by that name." The plan, first in three or four divisions, had been finally digested into six. Vague outlines had become definite and clear. Distinct portions had been worked out. Various modes of treatment had been tried, abandoned, modified. Prefaces were written to give the sketch and purpose of chapters not yet composed. The *Novum Organum* had been written and rewritten twelve times over. Bacon kept his papers, and we can trace in the unused portion of those left behind him much of the progress of his work, and the shapes which much of it went through. The *Advancement* itself is the filling out and perfecting of what is found in germ, meagre and rudimentary, in a *Discourse in Praise of Knowledge*, written in the days of Elizabeth, and in some Latin chapters of an early date, the *Cogitationes de Scientia Humana*, on the limits and use of knowledge, and on the relation of natural history to natural philosophy. These early essays, with much of the same characteristic illustration, and many of the favourite images and maxims and texts and phrases, which continue to appear in his writings to the end, contain the thoughts of a man long accustomed to meditate and to see his way on the new



aspects of knowledge, opening upon him. And before the *Advancement*, he had already tried his hand on a work intended to be in two books, which Mr. Ellis describes as a "great work on the Interpretation of Nature," the "earliest type of the *Instauratio*," and which Bacon called by the enigmatical name of *Valerius Terminus*. In it, as in a second draft, which in its turn was superseded by the *Advancement*, the line of thought of the Latin *Cogitationes* reappears, expanded and more carefully ordered; it contains also the first sketch of his certain and infallible method for what he calls the "freeing of the direction" in the search after Truth, and the first indications of the four classes of "Idols" which were to be so memorable a portion of Bacon's teaching. And between the *Advancement* and the *Novum Organum* at least one unpublished treatise of great interest intervened, the *Visa et Cogitata*, on which he was long employed, and which he brought to a finished shape, fit to be submitted to his friends and critics, Sir Thomas Bodley and Bishop Andrewes. It is spoken of as a book to be "imparted *sicut videbitur*," in the review which he made of his life and objects soon after he was made Solicitor in 1608. A number of fragments also bear witness to the fierce scorn and wrath which possessed him against the older and the received philosophies. He tried his hand at declamatory onslaughts on the leaders of human wisdom from the early Greeks and Aristotle down to the latest "novellists;" and he certainly succeeded in being magnificently abusive. But he thought wisely that this was not the best way of doing what in the *Commentarius Solutus* he calls on himself to do — "taking a greater confidence and

authority in discourses of this nature, *tanquam sui certus et de alto despiciens*;" and the rhetorical *Redargutio Philosophiarum*, and writings of kindred nature were laid aside by his more serious judgment. But all these fragments witness to the immense and unwearied labour bestowed in the midst of a busy life on his undertaking; they suggest, too, the suspicion that there was much waste from interruption, and the doubt whether his work would not have been better if it could have been more steadily continuous. But if ever a man had a great object in life and pursued it through good and evil report, through ardent hope and keen disappointment, to the end, with unwearied patience and unshaken faith, it was Bacon, when he sought the improvement of human knowledge "for the glory of God and the relief of man's estate." It is not the least part of the pathetic fortune of his life that his own success was so imperfect.

When a reader first comes, from the vague popular notions of Bacon's work, to his definite proposals, the effect is startling. Every one has heard that he contemplated a complete reform of the existing conceptions of human knowledge, and of the methods by which knowledge was to be sought; that rejecting them as vitiated by the loose and untested way in which they had been formed, he called men from verbal generalisations and unproved assumptions to come down face to face with the realities of experience; that he substituted for formal reasoning from baseless premisses and unmeaning principles a methodical system of cautious and sifting inference from wide observation and experiment; and that he thus opened the path which modern science

thenceforth followed, with its amazing and unexhausted discoveries, and its vast and beneficent practical results. We credit all this to Bacon, and assuredly not without reason. All this is what was embraced in his vision of a changed world of thought and achievement. All this is what was meant by that *Regnum Hominis*, which, with a play on sacred words which his age did not shrink from, and which he especially pleased himself with, marked the coming of that hitherto unimagined empire of man over the powers and forces which encompassed him. But the detail of all this is multifarious and complicated, and is not always what we expect; and when we come to see how his work is estimated by those who, by greatest familiarity with scientific ideas and the history of scientific inquiries, are best fitted to judge of it, many a surprise awaits us.

For we find that the greatest differences of opinion exist on the value of what he did. Not only very unfavourable judgments have been passed upon it, on general grounds, as an irreligious, or a shallow and one-sided, or a poor and "utilitarian" philosophy, and on a definite comparison of it with the actual methods and processes which as a matter of history have been the real means of scientific discovery—but also some of those who have most admired his genius, and with the deepest love and reverence have spared no pains to do it full justice, have yet come to the conclusion that as an instrument and real method of work Bacon's attempt was a failure. It is not only De Maistre and Lord Macaulay who dispute his philosophical eminence. It is not only the depreciating opinion of a contemporary like Harvey, who was actually doing what

Bacon was writing about. It is not only that men who after the long history of modern science have won their place among its leaders, and are familiar by daily experience with the ways in which it works—a chemist like Liebig, a physiologist like Claude Bernard—say that they can find nothing to help them in Bacon's methods. It is not only that a clear and exact critic like M. de Rémusat looks at his attempt with its success and failure as characteristic of English massive practical good sense rather than as marked by real philosophical depth and refinement, such as Continental thinkers point to and are proud of in Descartes and Leibnitz. It is not even that a competent master of the whole domain of knowledge, Whewell, filled with the deepest sense of all that the world owes to Bacon, takes for granted that "though Bacon's general maxims are sagacious and animating, his particular precepts failed in his hands, and are now practically useless;" and assuming that Bacon's method is not the right one, and not complete as far as the progress of science up to his time could direct it, proceeds to construct a *Novum Organum Renovatum*. But Bacon's writings have recently undergone the closest examination by two editors, whose care for his memory is as loyal and affectionate as their capacity is undoubted, and their willingness to take trouble boundless. And Mr. Ellis and Mr. Spedding, with all their interest in every detail of Bacon's work, and admiration of the way in which he performed it, make no secret of their conclusion that he failed in the very thing on which he was most bent—the discovery of practical and fruitful ways of scientific inquiry. "Bacon," says Mr. Spedding, "failed to devise a practicable method



for the discovery of the Forms of Nature because he misconceived the conditions of the case. . . . For the same reason he failed to make any single discovery which holds its place as one of the steps by which science has in any direction really advanced. The clue with which he entered the labyrinth did not reach far enough ; before he had nearly attained his end he was obliged either to come back or to go on without it."

"His peculiar system of philosophy," says Mr. Spedding in another preface, "that is to say, the peculiar method of investigation, the "*organum*," the "*formula*," the "*clavis*," the "*ars ipsa interpretandi naturam*," the "*filum Labyrinthi*," or by whatever of its many names we choose to call that artificial process by which alone he believed man could attain a knowledge of the laws and a command over the powers of nature—*of this philosophy we can make nothing*. If we have not tried it, it is because we feel confident that it would not answer. We regard it as a curious piece of machinery, very subtle, elaborate, and ingenious, but not worth constructing, because all the work it could do may be done more easily another way."—*Works*, iii. 171.

What his method really was is itself a matter of question. Mr. Ellis speaks of it as a matter "but imperfectly apprehended." He differs from his fellow-labourer Mr. Spedding, in what he supposes to be its central and characteristic innovation. Mr. Ellis finds it in an improvement and perfection of logical machinery. Mr. Spedding finds it in the formation of a great "natural and experimental history," a vast collection of facts in every department of nature, which was to be a more important part of his philosophy than the *Novum Organum* itself. Both of them think that as he went on the difficulties of the work grew upon him, and caused alterations in his plans, and we are reminded that "there is no didactic exposi-

tion of his method in the whole of his writings," and that "this has not been sufficiently remarked by those who have spoken of his philosophy."

In the first place, the kind of intellectual instrument which he proposed to construct was a mistake. His great object was to place the human mind "on a level with things and nature" (*ut faciamus intellectum humanum rebus et naturæ parem*), and this could only be done by a revolution in methods. The ancients had all that genius could do for man; but it was a matter, he said; not of the strength and fleetness of the running, but of the rightness of the way. It was a new method, absolutely different from anything known, which he proposed to the world, and which should lead men to knowledge, with the certainty and with the impartial facility of a high road. The Induction which he imagined to himself as the contrast to all that had yet been tried was to have two qualities. It was to end, by no very prolonged or difficult processes, in absolute certainty. And next, it was to leave very little to the differences of intellectual power: it was to level minds and capacities. It was to give all men the same sort of power which a pair of compasses gives the hand in drawing a circle. "*Absolute certainty, and a mechanical mode of procedure*," says Mr. Ellis, "*such that all men should be capable of employing it, are the two great features of the Baconian system.*" This he thought possible, and this he set himself to expound—"a method universally applicable, and in all cases infallible." In this he saw the novelty and the vast importance of his discovery. "By this method all the knowledge which the human mind was capable of receiving might be attained, and attained

without unnecessary labour." It was a method of "a demonstrative character, with the power of reducing all minds to nearly the same level." The conception, indeed, of a "great Art of knowledge," of an "Instauration" of the sciences, of a "Clavis" which should unlock the difficulties which had hindered discovery—was not a new one. This attempt at a method, which should be certain, which should level capacities, which should do its work in a short time, had a special attraction for the imagination of the wild spirits of the South, from Raimond Lulli in the thirteenth century to the audacious Calabrians of the sixteenth. With Bacon it was something much more serious and reasonable and business-like. But such a claim has never yet been verified; there is no reason to think that it ever can be; and to have made it shows a fundamental defect in Bacon's conception of the possibilities of the human mind and the field it has to work in.

In the next place, though the prominence which he gave to the doctrine of Induction was one of those novelties which are so obvious after the event, though so strange before it, and was undoubtedly the element in his system which gave it life and power and influence on the course of human thought and discovery, his account of Induction was far from complete and satisfactory. Without troubling himself about the theory of Induction, as De Rémusat has pointed out, he contented himself with applying to its use the precepts of common-sense and a sagacious perception of the circumstances in which it was to be employed. But even these precepts, notable as they were, wanted distinctness and the qualities needed for working rules. The change is

great when in fifty years we pass from the poetical science of Bacon to the mathematical and precise science of Newton. His own time may well have been struck by the originality and comprehensiveness of such a discriminating arrangement of proofs as the "Prerogative Instances" of the *Novum Organum*, so natural and real, yet never before thus compared and systematized. But there is a great interval between his method of experimenting, his "*Hunt of Pan*"—the three tables of Instances, "*Presence*," "*Absence*," and "*Degrees, or Comparisons*," leading to a process of sifting and exclusion, and to the *First Vintage*, or beginnings of theory—and say, for instance, Mill's four methods of experimental inquiry, the method of *agreement*, of *differences*, of *residues*, and of *concomitant variations*. The course which he marked out so laboriously and so ingeniously for Induction to follow was one which was found to be impracticable, and as barren of results as those deductive philosophies on which he lavished his scorn. He has left precepts and examples of what he meant by his cross-examining and sifting processes. As admonitions to cross-examine and to sift facts and phenomena they are valuable. Many of the observations and classifications are subtle and instructive. But in his hands nothing comes of them. They lead at the utmost to mere negative conclusions; they show what a thing is not. But his attempt to elicit anything positive out of them breaks down, or ends at best in divinations and guesses, sometimes—as in connecting Heat and Motion—very near to later and more carefully-grounded theories, but always unverified. He had a radically false and mechanical conception, though in words he earnestly disclaims it, of the way to deal



with the facts of nature. He looked on them as things which told their own story, and suggested the questions which ought to be put to them ; and with this idea half his time was spent in collecting huge masses of indigested facts of the most various authenticity and value, and he thought he was collecting materials which his method had only to touch in order to bring forth from them light and truth and power. He thought that, not in certain sciences, but in all, one set of men could do the observing and collecting, and another be set on the work of Induction and the discovery of "axioms." Doubtless in the arrangement and sorting of them his versatile and ingenious mind gave itself full play ; he divides and distinguishes them into their companies and groups, different kinds of Motion, "Prerogative" instances with their long tale of imaginative titles. But we look in vain for any use that he was able to make of them, or even to suggest. Bacon never adequately realised that no promiscuous assemblage of even the most certain facts could ever lead to knowledge, could ever suggest their own interpretation, without the action on them of the living mind, without the initiative of an idea. In truth he was so afraid of assumptions and "anticipations" and prejudices—his great bugbear was so much the "*intellectus sibi permissus*," the mind given liberty to guess and imagine and theorise, instead of, as it ought, absolutely and servilely submitting itself to the control of facts, that he missed the true place of the rational and formative element in his account of Induction. He does tell us, indeed, that "truth emerges sooner from error than from confusion." He indulges the mind, in the course of its investigation of "Instances," with a first

“vintage” of provisional generalisations. But of the way in which the living mind of the discoverer works, with its ideas, and insight, and thoughts that come no one knows whence, working hand in hand with what comes before the eye or is tested by the instrument, he gives us no picture. Compare his elaborate investigation of the “Form of Heat” in the *Novum Organum* with such a record of real inquiry as Wells’ *Treatise on Dew*, or Herschel’s analysis of it in his *Introduction to Natural Philosophy*. And of the difference of genius between a Faraday or a Newton, and the crowd of average men who have used and finished off their work, he takes no account. Indeed, he thinks that for the future such difference is to disappear.

“That his method is impracticable,” says Mr. Ellis, “cannot, I think, be denied, if we reflect not only that it never has produced any result, but also that the process by which scientific truths have been established cannot be so presented as even to appear to be in accordance with it. In all cases this process involves an element to which nothing corresponds in the Tables of ‘Comparance’ and ‘Exclusion,’ namely, the application to the facts of observation of a principle of arrangement, an idea, existing in the mind of the discoverer antecedently to the act of induction. It may be said that this idea is precisely one of the *naturæ* into which the facts of observation ought in Bacon’s system to be analysed. And this is in one sense true ; but it must be added that this analysis, if it be thought right so to call it, is of the essence of the discovery which results from it. In most cases the act of induction follows as a matter of course as soon as the appropriate idea has been introduced.”—(Ellis, *General Preface*, i. 38.)

Lastly, not only was Bacon’s conception of philosophy so narrow as to exclude one of its greatest domains ; for, says Mr. Ellis, “it cannot be denied that to Bacon all sound philosophy seemed to be included in what we now

call the natural sciences," and in all its parts was claimed as the subject of his inductive method ; but Bacon's scientific knowledge and scientific conceptions were often very imperfect—more imperfect than they ought to have been for his time. Of one large part of science, which was just then beginning to be cultivated with high promise of success, the knowledge of the heavens, he speaks with a coldness and suspicion which contrasts remarkably with his eagerness about things belonging to the sphere of the earth, and within reach of the senses. He holds, of course, the unity of the world ; the laws of the whole visible universe are one order ; but the heavens, wonderful as they are to him, are—compared with other things—out of his track of inquiry. He had his astronomical theories ; he expounded them in his "*Descriptio Globi Intellectualis*" and his *Thema Coeli*. He was not altogether ignorant of what was going on in days when Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo were at work. But he did not know how to deal with it, and there were men in England, before and then, who understood much better than he the problems and the methods of astronomy. He had one conspicuous and strange defect for a man who undertook what he did. He was not a mathematician : he did not see the indispensable necessity of mathematics in the great *Instauration* which he projected ; he did not much believe in what they could do. He cared so little about them that he takes no notice of Napier's invention of Logarithms. He was not able to trace how the direct information of the senses might be rightly subordinated to the rational, but not self-evident results of geometry and arithmetic. He was impatient of the subtleties of astronomical calculations ; they only

attempted to satisfy problems about the motion of bodies in the sky, and told us nothing of physical fact : they gave us, as Prometheus gave to Jove, the outside skin of the offering, which was stuffed inside with straw and rubbish. He entirely failed to see that before dealing with physical astronomy, it must be dealt with mathematically. "It is well to remark," as Mr. Ellis says, "that none of Newton's astronomical discoveries could have been made if astronomers had not continued to render themselves liable to Bacon's censure." Bacon little thought that in navigation the compass itself would become a subordinate instrument compared with the helps given by mathematical astronomy. In this, and in other ways, Bacon rose above his time in his conceptions of what *might be*, but not of what *was*; the list is a long one, as given by Mr. Spedding (iii. 511), of the instances which show that he was ill-informed about the advances of knowledge in his own time. And his mind was often not clear when he came to deal with complex phenomena. Thus, though he constructed a table of specific gravities—"the only collection," says Mr. Ellis, "of quantitative experiments that we find in his works," and "wonderfully accurate considering the manner in which they were obtained ;" yet he failed to understand the real nature of the famous experiment of Archimedes. And so with the larger features of his teaching it is impossible not to feel how imperfectly he had emancipated himself from the power of words, and of common prepossessions ; how for one reason or another he had failed to call himself to account in the terms he employed, and the assumptions on which he argued. The caution does not seem to have occurred to



him that the statement of a fact may, in nine cases out of ten, involve a theory. His whole doctrine of "Forms," and "Simple natures," which is so prominent in his method of investigation, is an example of loose and slovenly use of unexamined and untested ideas. He allowed himself to think that it would be possible to arrive at an alphabet of nature, which, once attained, would suffice to spell out and constitute all its infinite combinations. He accepted, without thinking it worth a doubt, the doctrine of appetites, and passions, and inclinations, and dislikes, and horrors, in inorganic nature. His whole physiology of life and death depends on a doctrine of animal spirits, of which he traces the operations and qualities as if they were as certain as the nerves or the blood, and of which he gives this account—"that in every tangible body there is a spirit covered and enveloped in the grosser body;" "not a virtue, not an energy, not an actuality, nor any such idle matter, but a body thin and invisible, and yet having place, and dimension, and real." . . . "a middle nature between flame, which is momentary, and air which is permanent." Yet these are the very things for which he holds up Aristotle and the Scholastics and the Italian speculators to reprobation and scorn. The clearness of his thinking was often overlaid by the immense profusion of decorative material which his meditation brought along with it. The defect was greater than that which even his ablest defenders admit. It was more than that in that "greatest and radical difference, which he himself observes" between minds, the difference between minds which were apt to note *distinctions*, and those which were apt to note *likenesses*, he was, without knowing it, defec-

tive in the first. It was that in many instances, he exemplified in his own work the very faults which he charged on the older philosophies: haste, carelessness, precipitancy, using words without thinking them out, assuming to know when he ought to have perceived his real ignorance.

What then, with all these mistakes and failures, not always creditable or pardonable, has given Bacon his pre-eminent place in the history of science?

1. The answer is that with all his mistakes and failures, the principles on which his mode of attaining a knowledge of nature was based were the only true ones; and they had never before been propounded so systematically, so fully, and so earnestly. His was not the first mind on whom these principles had broken. Men were, and had been for some time, pursuing their inquiries into various departments of nature precisely on the general plan of careful and honest observation of real things which he enjoined. They had seen, as he saw, the futility of all attempts at natural philosophy by mere thinking and arguing, without coming into contact with the contradictions, or corrections, or verifications of experience. In Italy, in Germany, in England there were laborious and successful workers, who had long felt that to be in touch with nature was the only way to know. But no one had yet come before the world to proclaim this on the house-tops, as the key of the only certain path to the secrets of nature, the watchword of a revolution in the methods of interpreting her; and this Bacon did with an imposing authority and power which enforced attention. He spoke the thoughts of patient toilers like Harvey with a largeness and richness which they could

not command, and which they perhaps smiled at. He disentangled and spoke the vague thoughts of his age, which other men had not the courage and clearness of mind to formulate. What Bacon *did*, indeed, and what he *meant*, are separate matters. He *meant* an infallible method by which man should be fully equipped for a struggle with nature : he meant an irresistible and immediate conquest, within a definite and not distant time. It was too much. He himself saw no more of what he *meant* than Columbus did of America. But what he *did* was, to persuade men for the future that the intelligent, patient, persevering cross-examination of things, and the thoughts about them, was the only, and was the successful road to know. No one had yet done this, and he did it. His writings were a public recognition of real science, in its humblest tasks about the commonplace facts before our feet, as well as in its loftiest achievements. "The man who is growing great and happy by electrifying a bottle," says Dr. Johnson, "wonders to see the world engaged in the prattle about peace and war," and the world was ready to smile at the simplicity or the impertinence of his enthusiasm. Bacon impressed upon the world for good, with every resource of subtle observation and forcible statement, that "the man who is growing great by electrifying a bottle," is as important a person in the world's affairs as the arbiter of peace and war.

2. Yet this is not all. An inferior man might have made himself the mouthpiece of the hopes and aspirations of his generation after a larger science. But to Bacon these aspirations embodied themselves in the form of a great and absorbing idea ; an idea which took pos-

session of the whole man, kindling in him a faith which nothing could quench, and a passion which nothing could dull ; an idea which, for forty years, was his daily companion, his daily delight, his daily business ; an idea which he was never tired of placing in ever fresh and more attractive lights, from which no trouble could wean him, about which no disaster could make him despair ; an idea round which the instincts and intuitions and obstinate convictions of genius gathered, which kindled his rich imagination, and was invested by it with a splendour and magnificence like the dreams of fable. It is this idea which finds its fitting expression in the grand and stately aphorisms of the *Novum Organum*, in the varied fields of interest in the *De Augmentis*, in the romance of the *New Atlantis*. It is this idea, this certainty of a new unexplored Kingdom of Knowledge within the reach and grasp of man, if he will be humble enough, and patient enough, and truthful enough to occupy it—this announcement not only of a new system of thought, but of a change in the condition of the world, a prize and possession such as man had not yet imagined, this belief in the fortunes of the human race and its issue, “such an issue, it may be, as in the present condition of things and men’s minds cannot easily be conceived or imagined,” yet more than verified in the wonders which our eyes have seen—it is this which gives its prerogative to Bacon’s work. That he bungled about the processes of Induction, that he talked about an unintelligible doctrine of *Forms*, did not affect the weight and solemnity of his call to learn, so full of wisdom and good sense, so sober and so solid, yet so audaciously confident. There had been nothing like it in its ardour of hope, in the



glory which it threw around the investigation of nature. It was the presence and the power of a great idea—long become a commonplace to us, but strange and perplexing at first to his own generation, which probably shared Coke's opinion that it qualified its champion for a place in the company of the "Ship of Fools," which expressed its opinion of the man who wrote the *Novum Organum* in the sentiment that "a fool *could* not have written it, and a wise man *would* not"—it is this which has placed Bacon among the great discoverers of the human race.

It is this imaginative yet serious assertion of the vast range and possibilities of human knowledge which, as M. de Rémusat remarks, the keenest and fairest of Bacon's judges, gives Bacon his claim to the undefinable but very real character of greatness. Two men stand out, "the masters of those who know," without equals up to their time, among men—the Greek Aristotle and the Englishman Bacon. They agree in the universality and comprehensiveness of their conception of human knowledge; and they were absolutely alone in their serious practical ambition to work out this conception. In the separate departments of thought, of investigation, of art, each is left far behind by numbers of men, who in these separate departments have gone far deeper than they, have soared higher, have been more successful in what they attempted. But Aristotle first, and for his time more successfully, and Bacon after him, ventured on the daring enterprise of "taking all knowledge for their province;" and in this they stood alone. This present scene of man's existence, this that we call nature, the stage on which mortal life begins and goes on and ends, the faculties with which man is equipped to act, to enjoy, to create,

to hold his way amid or against the circumstances and forces round him—this is what each wants to know, as thoroughly and really as can be. It is not to reduce things to a theory or a system that they look around them on the place where they find themselves with life and thought and power: that were easily done, and has been done over and over again, only to prove its futility. It is to know, as to the whole and its parts, as men understand *knowing* in some one subject of successful handling, whether art, or science, or practical craft. This idea, this effort, distinguishes these two men. The Greeks—predecessors, contemporaries, successors of Aristotle—were speculators, full of clever and ingenious guesses, in which the amount of clear and certain fact was in lamentable disproportion to the schemes blown up from it; or they devoted themselves more profitably to some one or two subjects of inquiry, moral or purely intellectual, with absolute indifference to what might be asked, or what might be known, of the real conditions under which they were passing their existence. Some of the Romans, Cicero and Pliny, had encyclopædic minds; but the Roman mind was the slave of precedent, and was more than satisfied with partially understanding and neatly arranging what the Greeks had left. The Arabians looked more widely about them; but the Arabians were essentially sceptics, and resigned subjects to the inevitable and the inexplicable; there was an irony, open or covert, in their philosophy, their terminology, their transcendental mysticism, which showed how little they believed that they really knew. The vast and mighty intellects of the schoolmen never came into a real grapple with the immensity of the facts of the

natural or even of the moral world ; within the world of abstract thought, the world of language with its infinite growths and consequences, they have never had their match for keenness, for patience, for courage, for inexhaustible toil ; but they were as much disconnected from the natural world, which was their stage of life, as if they had been disembodied spirits. The Renaissance brought with it not only the desire to know, but to know comprehensively and in all possible directions ; it brought with it temptations to the awakened Italian genius, renewed, enlarged, refined, if not strengthened by its passage through the Middle Ages, to make thought deal with the real, and to understand the scene in which men were doing such strange and wonderful things ; but Giordano Bruno, Telesio, Campanella, and their fellows, were not men capable of more than short flights, though they might be daring and eager ones. It required more thoroughness, more humble-minded industry, to match the magnitude of the task. And there have been men of universal minds and comprehensive knowledge since Bacon, Leibnitz, Goethe, Humboldt, men whose thoughts were at home everywhere, where there was something to be known. But even for them the world of knowledge has grown too large. We shall never again see an Aristotle or a Bacon, because the conditions of knowledge have altered. Bacon, like Aristotle, belonged to an age of adventure, which went to sea little knowing whither it went, and ill furnished with knowledge and instruments. He entered with a vast and vague scheme of discovery on these unknown seas and new worlds, which to us are familiar and daily traversed in every direction. This new world of knowledge has turned out

in many ways very different from what Aristotle or Bacon supposed, and has been conquered by implements and weapons very different in precision and power from what they purposed to rely on. But the combination of patient and careful industry, with the courage and divination of genius, in doing what none had done before, makes it equally stupid and idle to impeach their greatness.

3. Bacon has been charged with bringing philosophy down from the heights, not as of old to make men know themselves, and to be the teacher of the highest form of truth, but to be the purveyor of material utility. It contemplates only, it is said, the "*commoda vitæ*;" about the deeper and more elevating problems of thought it does not trouble itself. It concerns itself only about external and sensible nature, about what is "of the earth, earthy." But when it comes to the questions which have attracted the keenest and hardiest thinkers, the question, what it is that thinks and wills,—what is the origin and guarantee of the faculties by which men know anything at all and form rational and true conceptions about nature and themselves, whence it is that reason draws its powers and materials and rules—what is the meaning of words which all use but few can explain—Time and Space, and Being and Cause, and consciousness and choice, and the moral law—Bacon is content with a loose and superficial treatment of them. Bacon certainly was not a metaphysician, nor an exact and lucid reasoner. With wonderful flashes of sure intuition or happy anticipation, his mind was deficient in the powers which deal with the deeper problems of thought, just as it was deficient in the mathematical



faculty. The subtlety, the intuition, the penetration, the severe precision, even the force of imagination, which make a man a great thinker on any abstract subject were not his; the interest of questions which had interested metaphysicians had no interest for him: he distrusted and undervalued them. When he touches the "ultimities" of knowledge he is as obscure and hard to be understood as any of those restless Southern Italians of his own age, who shared with him the ambition of reconstructing science. Certainly the science which most interested Bacon, the science which he found as he thought in so desperate a condition, and to which he gave so great an impulse, was physical science. But physical science may be looked at and pursued in different ways, in different tempers, with different objects. It may be followed in the spirit of Newton, of Boyle, of Herschel, of Faraday; or with a confined and low horizon it may be dwarfed and shrivelled into a mean utilitarianism. But Bacon's horizon was not a narrow one. He believed in God, and immortality, and the Christian creed and hope. To him the restoration of the Reign of Man was a noble enterprise, because man was so great and belonged to so great an order of things, because the things which he was bid to search into with honesty and truthfulness were the works and laws of God, because it was so shameful and so miserable that from an ignorance which industry and good sense could remedy, the tribes of mankind passed their days in self-imposed darkness and helplessness. It was God's appointment that men should go through this earthly stage of their being. Each stage of man's mysterious existence had to be dealt with, not according to his own

fancies, but according to the conditions imposed on it ; and it was one of man's first duties to arrange for his stay on earth according to the real laws which he could find out if he only sought for them. Doubtless it was one of Bacon's highest hopes that from the growth of true knowledge would follow in surprising ways the relief of man's estate ; this, as an end, runs through all his yearning after a fuller and surer method of interpreting nature. The desire to be a great benefactor, the spirit of sympathy and pity for mankind, reign through this portion of his work—pity for confidence so greatly abused by the teachers of man, pity for ignorance which might be dispelled, pity for pain and misery which might be relieved. In the quaint but beautiful picture of courtesy, kindness, and wisdom, which he imagines in the *New Atlantis*, the representative of true philosophy, the "Father of Solomon's House," is introduced as one who "had an aspect as if he pitied men." But unless it is utilitarianism to be keenly alive to the needs and pains of life, and to be eager and busy to lighten and assuage them, Bacon's philosophy was not utilitarian. It may deserve many reproaches, but not this one. Such a passage as the following—in which are combined the highest motives and graces and passions of the soul, love of truth, humility of mind, purity of purpose, reverence for God, sympathy for man, compassion for the sorrows of the world and longing to heal them, depth of conviction and faith—fairly represents the spirit which runs through his works. After urging the mistaken use of imagination and authority in science, he goes on :—

"There is not and never will be an end or limit to this ; one

catches at one thing, another at another ; each has his favourite fancy ; pure and open light there is none ; every one philosophises out of the cells of his own imagination, as out of Plato's cave ; the higher wits with more acuteness and felicity, the duller, less happily but with equal pertinacity. And now of late by the regulation of some learned and (as things now are) excellent men (the former licence having, I suppose, become wearisome), the sciences are confined to certain and prescribed authors, and thus restrained are imposed upon the old and instilled into the young ; so that now (to use the sarcasm of Cicero concerning Cæsar's year), the constellation of Lyra rises by edict, and authority is taken for truth, not truth for authority. Which kind of institution and discipline is excellent for present use, but precludes all prospect of improvement. For we copy the sin of our first parents while we suffer for it. They wished to be like God, but their posterity wish to be even greater. For we create worlds, we direct and domineer over nature, we will have it that all things *are* as in our folly we think they should be, not as seems fittest to the Divine wisdom, or as they are found to be in fact ; and I know not whether we more distort the facts of nature or of our own wits ; but we clearly impress the stamp of our own image on the creatures and works of God, instead of carefully examining and recognising in them the stamp of the Creator himself. Wherefore our dominion over creatures is a second time forfeited, not undeservedly ; and whereas after the fall of man some power over the resistance of creatures was still left to him—the power of subduing and managing them by true and solid arts—yet this too through our insolence, and because we desire to be like God and to follow the dictates of our own reason, we in great part lose. If, therefore, there be any humility towards the Creator, any reverence for or disposition to magnify His works, any charity for man and anxiety to relieve his sorrows and necessities, any love of truth in nature, any hatred of darkness, any desire for the purification of the understanding, we must entreat men again and again to discard, or at least set apart for a while, these volatile and preposterous philosophies which have preferred theses to hypotheses, led experience captive, and triumphed over the works of God ; and to approach with humility and veneration to unroll the volume of Creation, to linger and meditate therein, and with minds washed clean from opinions to study it in purity and integrity. For this

is that sound and language which “went forth into all lands,” and did not incur the confusion of Babel ; this should men study to be perfect in, and becoming again as little children condescend to take the alphabet of it into their hands, and spare no pains to search and unravel the interpretation thereof, but pursue it strenuously and persevere even unto death.”—(Preface to *Historia Naturalis* ; translated, *Works*, v. 132-3.)



## CHAPTER IX.

### BACON AS A WRITER.

BACON'S name belongs to letters as well as to philosophy. In his own day, whatever his contemporaries thought of his *Instauration of Knowledge*, he was in the first rank as a speaker and a writer. Sir Walter Raleigh, contrasting him with Salisbury, who could speak but not write, and Northampton, who could write but not speak, thought Bacon eminent both as a speaker and a writer. Ben Jonson, passing in review the more famous names of his own and the preceding age, from Sir Thomas More to Sir Philip Sidney, Hooker, Essex and Raleigh, places Bacon without a rival at the head of the company as the man who had "fulfilled all numbers," and "stood as the mark and ἀκμὴ of our language." And he also records Bacon's power as a speaker. "No man," he says, "ever spoke more neatly, more pressly, or suffered less emptiness, less idleness, in what he uttered." . . . "His hearers could not cough or look aside from him without loss. He commanded when he spoke, and had his judges angry and pleased at his devotion . . . the fear of every man that heard him was that he should make an end." He notices one feature for which we are less prepared, though we know that

the edge of Bacon's sarcastic tongue was felt and resented in James's Court. "His speech," says Ben Jonson, "was nobly censorious when he could *spare and pass by a jest*." The unpopularity which certainly seems to have gathered round his name may have had something to do with this reputation.

Yet as an English writer Bacon did not expect to be remembered, and he hardly cared to be. He wrote much in Latin, and his first care was to have his books put into a Latin dress. "For these modern languages," he wrote to Toby Matthew towards the close of his life, "will at one time or another play the bank-rowte with books, and since I have lost much time with this age, I would be glad if God would give me leave to recover it with posterity." He wanted to be read by the learned out of England, who were supposed to appreciate his philosophical ideas better than his own countrymen, and the only way to this was to have his books translated into the "general language." He sends Prince Charles the *Advancement* in its new Latin dress. "It is a book," he says, "that will live, and be a citizen of the world, as English books are not." And he fitted it for continental reading by carefully weeding it of all passages that might give offence to the censors at Rome or Paris. "I have been," he writes to the King, "mine own *Index Expurgatorius*, that it may be read in all places. For since my end of putting it in Latin was to have it read everywhere, it had been an absurd contradiction to free it in the language and to pen it up in the matter." Even the *Essays* and the *History of Henry VII.* he had put into Latin "by some good pens that do not forsake me." Among these translators are said to have been

George Herbert and Hobbes, and on more doubtful authority, Ben Jonson and Selden. The *Essays* were also translated into Latin and Italian with Bacon's sanction.

Bacon's contemptuous and hopeless estimate of "these modern languages," forty years after Spenser had proclaimed and justified his faith in his own language, is only one of the proofs of the short-sightedness of the wisest and the limitations of the largest-minded. Perhaps we ought not to wonder at his silence about Shakespeare. It was the fashion, except among a set of clever but not always very reputable people, to think the stage, as it was, below the notice of scholars and statesmen; and Shakespeare took no trouble to save his works from neglect. Yet it is a curious defect in Bacon that he should not have been more alive to the powers and future of his own language. He early and all along was profoundly impressed with the contrast, which the scholarship of the age so abundantly presented, of words to things. He dwells in the *Advancement* on that "first distemper of learning, when men study words and not matter." He illustrates it at large from the reaction of the new learning and of the popular teaching of the Reformation against the utilitarian and unclassical terminology of the schoolmen; a reaction which soon grew to excess and made men "hunt more after choiceness of the phrase, and the round and clean composition of the sentence and the sweet falling of the clauses," than after worth of subject, soundness of argument, "life of invention or depth of judgment." "I have represented this," he says, "in an example of late times, but it hath been and will be *secundum majus et minus* in all

times ;” and he likens this “vanity” to “Pygmalion’s frenzy,”—“for to fall in love with words which are but the images of matter, is all one as to fall in love with a picture.” He was dissatisfied with the first attempt at translation into Latin of the *Advancement* by Dr. Playfer of Cambridge, because he “desired not so much neat and polite, as clear, masculine, and apt expression.” Yet, with this hatred of circumlocution and prettiness, of the cloudy amplifications, and pompous flourishings, and “the flowing and watery vein,” which the scholars of his time affected, it is strange that he should not have seen that the new ideas and widening thoughts of which he was the herald would want a much more elastic and more freely-working instrument than Latin could ever become. It is wonderful indeed what can be done with Latin. It was long after his day to be the language of the exact sciences. In his *History of the Winds*, which is full of his irrepressible fancy and picturesqueness, Bacon describes in clear and intelligible Latin the details of the rigging of a modern man-of-war, and the mode of sailing her. But such tasks impose a yoke, sometimes a rough one, on a language which has “taken its ply” in very different conditions, and of which the genius is that of indirect and circuitous expression, “full of majesty and circumstance.” But it never, even in those days of scholarship, could lend itself to the frankness, the straightforwardness, the fullness and shades of suggestion and association, with which, in handling ideas of subtlety and difficulty, a writer would wish to speak to his reader, and which he could find only in his mother tongue. It might have been thought that with Bacon’s contempt of form and ceremony in these matters, his consciousness of the powers



of English in his hands might have led him to anticipate that a flexible, and rich, and strong language might create a literature, and that a literature, if worth studying, would be studied in its own language. But so great a change was beyond even his daring thoughts. To him, as to his age, the only safe language was the Latin. For familiar use English was well enough. But it could not be trusted; "it would play the bankrupt with books." And yet Galileo was writing in Italian as well as in Latin; only within twenty-five years later, Descartes was writing *De la Méthode*, and Pascal was writing in the same French in which he wrote the *Provincial Letters*, his *Nouvelles Expériences touchant le Vide*, and the controversial pamphlets which followed it; showing how in that interval of five-and-twenty years an instrument had been fashioned out of a modern language such as for lucid expression and clear reasoning, Bacon had not yet dreamed of. From Bacon to Pascal is the change from the old scientific way of writing to the modern; from a modern language as learned and used in the 16th century, to one learned in the 17th.

But the language of the age of Elizabeth was a rich and noble one, and it reached a high point in the hands of Bacon. In his hands it lent itself to many uses, and assumed many forms, and he valued it, not because he thought highly of its qualities as a language, but because it enabled him with least trouble "to speak as he would," in throwing off the abundant thoughts that rose within his mind, and in going through the variety of business which could not be done in Latin. But in all his writing it is the matter, the real thing that he wanted to say, which was uppermost. He cared how

it was said, not for the sake of form or ornament, but because the force and clearness of what was said depended so much on how it was said. Of course, what he wanted to say varied indefinitely with the various occasions of his life. His business may merely be to write "a device" or panegyric for a pageant in the Queen's honour, or for the revels of Gray's Inn. But even these trifles are the result of real thought, and are full of ideas, ideas about the hopes of knowledge or about the policy of the State; and though, of course, they have plenty of the flourishes and quaint absurdities indispensable on such occasions, yet the "rhetorical affectation" is in the thing itself, and not in the way it is handled: he had an opportunity of saying some of the things which were to him of deep and perpetual interest, and he used it to say them, as forcibly, as strikingly, as attractively as he could. His manner of writing depends, not on a style, or a studied or acquired habit but on the nature of the task which he has in hand. Everywhere his matter is close to his words, and governs, animates, informs his words. No one in England before had so much as he had the power to say what he wanted to say, and exactly as he wanted to say it. No one was so little at the mercy of conventional language or customary rhetoric, except when he persuaded himself that he had to submit to those necessities of flattery, which cost him at last so dear.

The book by which English readers, from his own time to ours, have known him best, better than by the originality and the eloquence of the *Advancement*, or than by the political weight and historical imagination of the *History of Henry VII.*, is the first book which he published,

the volume of *Essays*. It is an instance of his self-willed but most skilful use of the freedom and ease which the "modern language," which he despised, gave him. It is obvious that he might have expanded these "Counsels, moral and political," to the size which such essays used to swell to after his time. Many people would have thanked him for doing so ; and some have thought it a good book on which to hang their own reflections and illustrations. But he saw how much could be done by leaving the beaten track of set treatise and discourse, and setting down unceremoniously the observations which he had made and the real rules which he had felt to be true, on various practical matters which come home to men's "business and bosoms." He was very fond of these moral and political generalisations, both of his own collecting and as found in writers who, he thought, had the right to make them, like the Latins of the Empire and the Italians and Spaniards of the Renaissance. But a mere string of maxims and quotations would have been a poor thing and not new ; and he cast what he had to say into connected wholes. But nothing can be more loose than the structure of the essays. There is no art, no style, almost, except in a few, the political ones, no order : thoughts are put down and left unsupported, unproved, undeveloped. In the first form of the ten, which composed the first edition of 1597, they are more like notes of analysis or tables of contents ; they are austere even to meagreness. But the general character continues in the enlarged and expanded ones of Bacon's later years. They are like chapters in Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Rhetoric* on virtues and characters ; only Bacon's takes Aristotle's

broad marking lines as drawn, and proceeds with the subtler and more refined observations of a much longer and wider experience. But these short papers say what they have to say without preface, and in literary undress, without a superfluous word, without the joints and bands of structure: they say it in brief, rapid sentences, which come down, sentence after sentence, like the strokes of a great hammer. No wonder that in their disdainful brevity they seem rugged and abrupt, "and do not seem to end, but fall." But with their truth and piercingness and delicacy of observation, their roughness gives a kind of flavour which no elaboration could give. It is none the less that their wisdom is of a somewhat cynical kind, fully alive to the slipperiness and self-deceits and faithlessness which are in the world and rather inclined to be amused at them. In some we can see distinct records of the writer's own experience: one contains the substance of a charge delivered to Judge Hutton on his appointment; another of them is a sketch drawn from life of a character which had crossed Bacon's path, and in the essay on *Seeming Wise* we can trace from the impatient notes put down in his *Commentarius Solutus*, the picture of the man who stood in his way, the Attorney-General Hobart. Some of them are memorable oracular utterances not inadequate to the subject, on *Truth*, or *Death*, or *Unity*. Others reveal an utter incapacity to come near a subject, except as a strange external phenomena, like the essay on *Love*. There is a distinct tendency in them to the Italian school of political and moral wisdom, the wisdom of distrust and of reliance on indirect and roundabout ways. There is a group of them, "of *Delays*," "of *Cunning*," "of *Wisdom for a Man's Self*," "of *Des-*



*patch*," which show how vigilantly and to what purpose he had watched the treasurers and secretaries and intriguers of Elizabeth's and James's Courts; and there are curious self-revelations, as in the essay on *Friendship*. But there are also currents of better and larger feeling, such as those which show his own ideal of "*Great Place*," and what he felt of its dangers and duties. And mixed with the fantastic taste and conceits of the time, there is evidence in them of Bacon's keen delight in nature, in the beauty and scents of flowers, in the charm of open air life, as in the essay on *Gardens*, "The purest of human pleasures, the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man."

But he had another manner of writing for what he held to be his more serious work. In the philosophical and historical works there is no want of attention to the flow and order and ornament of composition. When we come to the *Advancement of Learning*, we come to a book which is one of the landmarks of what high thought and rich imagination have made of the English language. It is the first great book in English prose of secular interest; the first book which can claim a place beside the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. As regards its subject-matter, it has been partly thrown into the shade by the greatly enlarged and elaborate form in which it ultimately appeared, in a Latin dress, as the first portion of the scheme of the *Instauratio*, the *De Augmentis Scientiarum*. Bacon looked on it as a first effort, a kind of call-bell to awaken and attract the interest of others in the thoughts and hopes which so interested himself. But it contains some of his finest writing. In the *Essays* he writes as a looker-on at the game of human affairs,

who, according to his frequent illustration, sees more of it than the gamesters themselves, and is able to give wiser and faithful counsel, not without a touch of kindly irony at the mistakes which he observes. In the *Advancement* he is the enthusiast for a great cause and a great hope, and all that he has of passion and power is enlisted in the effort to advance it. The *Advancement* is far from being a perfect book. As a survey of the actual state of knowledge in his day, of its deficiencies and what was wanted to supply them, it is not even up to the materials of the time. Even the improved *De Augmentis* is inadequate; and there is reason to think the *Advancement* was a hurried book, at least in the later part, and it is defective in arrangement and proportion of parts. Two of the great divisions of knowledge—history and poetry—are despatched in comparatively short chapters; while in the division on “Civil Knowledge,” human knowledge as it respects society, he inserts a long essay, obviously complete in itself and clumsily thrust in here, on the ways of getting on in the world, the means by which a man may be “*Faber fortunæ suæ*”—the architect of his own success; too lively a picture to be pleasant of the arts with which he had become acquainted in the process of rising. The book, too, has the blemishes of its own time; its want of simplicity, its inevitable though very often amusing and curious pedantries. But the *Advancement* was the first of a long line of books which have attempted to teach English readers how to think of knowledge; to make it really and intelligently the interest, not of the school or the study or the laboratory only, but of society at large. It was a book with a purpose, new then, but

of which we have seen the fulfilment. He wanted to impress on his generation, as a very practical matter, all that knowledge might do in wise hands, all that knowledge had lost by the faults and errors of men and the misfortunes of time, all that knowledge might be pushed to in all directions by faithful and patient industry and well-planned methods for the elevation and benefit of man in his highest capacities as well as in his humblest. And he further sought to teach them *how* to know ; to make them understand that difficult achievement of self-knowledge, to know *what it is* to know ; to give the first attempted chart to guide them among the shallows and rocks and whirlpools which beset the course and action of thought and inquiry ; to reveal to them the "idols" which unconsciously haunt the minds of the strongest as well as the weakest, and interpose their delusions when we are least aware,—“the fallacies and false appearances inseparable from our nature and our condition of life.” To induce men to believe not only that there was much to know that was not yet dreamed of, but that the way of knowing needed real and thorough improvement, that the knowing mind bore along with it all kinds of snares and disqualifications of which it is unconscious, and that it needed training quite as much as materials to work on, was the object of the *Advancement*. It was but a sketch ; but it was a sketch so truly and forcibly drawn, that it made an impression which has never been weakened. To us its use and almost its interest is passed. But it is a book which we can never open without coming on some noble interpretation of the realities of nature or the mind ; some unexpected discovery of that quick and keen eye which arrests us by its truth ; some felici-

tous and unthought-of illustration, yet so natural as almost to be doomed to become a commonplace; some bright touch of his incorrigible imaginativeness, ever ready to force itself in amid the driest details of his argument.

The *Advancement* was only one shape out of many into which he cast his thoughts. Bacon was not easily satisfied with his work; even when he published he did so, not because he had brought his work to the desired point, but lest anything should happen to him and it should "perish." Easy and unstudied as his writing seems, it was, as we have seen, the result of unintermitted trouble and varied modes of working. He was quite as much a talker as a writer, and beat out his thoughts into shape in talking. In the essay on *Friendship* he describes the process with a vividness which tells of his own experience:—

"But before you come to that [the faithful counsel that a man receiveth from his friend], certain it is that whosoever hath his mind fraught with many thoughts, his wits and understanding do clarify and break up in the communicating and discoursing with another. He tosseth his thoughts more easily; he marshalleth them more orderly; he seeth how they look when they are turned into words; finally, he waxeth wiser than himself, and that more by an hour's discourse than by a day's meditation. It was well said by Themistocles to the King of Persia, 'That speech was like cloth of arras opened and put abroad, whereby the imagery doth appear in figure; whereas in thought, they lie in packs.' Neither is this second fruit of friendship, in opening the understanding, restrained only to such friends as are able to give a man counsel. (They are, indeed, best.) But even without that, a man learneth of himself, and bringeth his own thoughts to light, and whetteth his wits against a stone which itself cuts not. In a word, a man were better relate himself to a *statua* or a picture, than to suffer his thoughts to pass in smother."



Bacon, as has been said, was a great maker of notes and note-books: he was careful not of the thought only but of the very words in which it presented itself; everything was collected that might turn out useful in his writing or speaking, down to alternative modes of beginning or connecting or ending a sentence. He watched over his intellectual appliances and resources much more strictly than over his money concerns. He never threw away and never forgot what could be turned to account. He was never afraid of repeating himself, if he thought he had something apt to say. He was never tired of re-casting and re-writing, from a mere fragment or preface to a finished paper. He has favourite images, favourite maxims, favourite texts, which he cannot do without. "*Da Fidei quæ sunt Fidei*," comes in from his first book to his last. The illustrations which he gets from the myth of Scylla, from Atalanta's ball, from Borgia's saying about the French marking their lodgings with chalk, the saying that God takes delight, like the "innocent play of children," "to hide his works in order to have them found out," and to have kings as "his playfellows in that game," these, with many others, reappear, however varied the context, from the first to the last of his compositions. An edition of Bacon with marginal references and parallel passages would show a more persistent recurrence of characteristic illustrations and sentences than perhaps any other writer.

The *Advancement* was followed by attempts to give serious effect to its lesson. This was nearly all done in Latin. He did so, because in these works he spoke to a larger and, as he thought, more interested audience; the

use of Latin marked the gravity of his subject as one that touched all mankind ; and the majesty of Latin suited his taste and his thoughts. Bacon spoke, indeed, impressively on the necessity of entering into the realm of knowledge in the spirit of a little child. He dwelt on the paramount importance of beginning from the very bottom of the scale of fact, of understanding the commonplace things at our feet, so full of wonder and mystery and instruction, before venturing on theories. The sun is not polluted by shining on a dunghill, and no facts were too ignoble to be beneath the notice of the true student of nature. But his own genius was for the grandeur and pomp of general views. The practical details of experimental science were, except in partial instances, yet a great way off ; and what there was, he either did not care about or really understand, and had no aptitude for handling. He knew enough to give reality to his argument ; he knew, and insisted on it, that the labour of observation and experiment would have to be very heavy and quite indispensable. But his own business was with great principles and new truths ; these were what had the real attraction for him ; it was the magnificent thoughts and boundless hopes of the approaching kingdom of man " which kindled his imagination and fired his ambition. " He writes philosophy," said Harvey, who had come to his own great discovery through patient and obscure experiments on frogs and monkeys, " he writes philosophy like a Lord Chancellor." And for this part of the work, the stateliness and dignity of the Latin corresponded to the proud claims which he made for his conception of the knowledge which was to be. English seemed to him too homely to express the hopes of the

world, too unstable to be trusted with them. Latin was the language of command and law. His Latin, without enslaving itself to Ciceronian types, and with a free infusion of barbarous but most convenient words from the vast and ingenious terminology of the schoolmen, is singularly forcible and expressive. It is almost always easy and clear; it can be vague and general, and it can be very precise where precision is wanted. It can, on occasion, be magnificent, and its gravity is continually enlivened by the play upon it, as upon a background, of his picturesque and unexpected fancies. The exposition of his philosophical principles was attempted in two forms. He began in English. He began, in the shape of a personal account, a statement of a series of conclusions to which his thinking had brought him, which he called the "Clue of the Labyrinth," *Filum Labyrinthi*. But he laid this aside unfinished, and re-wrote and completed it in Latin, with the title *Cogitata et Visa*. It gains by being in Latin; as Mr. Spedding says, "it must certainly be reckoned among the most perfect of Bacon's productions." The personal form with each paragraph begins and ends. "*Franciscus Bacon sic cogitavit . . . itaque visum est ei*," gives to it a special tone of serious conviction, and brings the interest of the subject more keenly to the reader. It has the same kind of personal interest, only more solemn and commanding, which there is in Descartes's *Discours de la Méthode*. In this form Bacon meant at first to publish. He sent it to his usual critics, Sir Thomas Bodley, Toby Matthew, and Bishop Andrewes. And he meant to follow it up with a practical exemplification of his method. But he changed his plan. He had more than once expressed his pre-

ference for the form of *aphorisms* over the argumentative and didactic continuity of a set discourse. He had, indeed, already twice begun a series of aphorisms on the true methods of interpreting nature, and directing the mind in the true path of knowledge, and had begun them with the same famous aphorism with which the *Novum Organum* opens. He now reverted to the form of the aphorism, and resolved to throw the materials of the *Cogitata et Visa* into this shape. The result is the *Novum Organum*. It contains, with large additions, the substance of the treatise, but broken up and re-arranged in the new form of separate impersonal generalised observations. The points and assertions and issues which, in a continuous discourse, careful readers mark and careless ones miss, are one by one picked out and brought separately to the light. It begins with brief, oracular, unproved maxims and propositions, and goes on gradually into larger developments and explanations. The aphorisms are meant to strike, to awaken questions, to disturb prejudices, to let in light into a nest of unsuspected intellectual confusions and self-misunderstandings, to be the mottoes and watchwords of many a laborious and difficult inquiry. They form a connected and ordered chain, though the ties between each link are not given. In this way Bacon put forth his proclamation of war on all that then called itself science ; his announcement that the whole work of solid knowledge must be begun afresh, and by a new, and, as he thought, infallible method. On this work Bacon concentrated all his care. It was twelve years in hand, and twelve times underwent his revision. "In the first book especially," says Mr. Ellis, "every word seems to have been



carefully weighed; and it would be hard to omit or change anything without injuring the meaning which Bacon intended to convey." Severe as it is, it is instinct with enthusiasm, sometimes with passion. The Latin in which it is written answers to it; it has the conciseness, the breadth, the lordliness of a great piece of philosophical legislation.

The world has agreed to date from Bacon the systematic reform of natural philosophy, the beginning of an intelligent attempt, which has been crowned by such signal success, to place the investigation of nature on a solid foundation. On purely scientific grounds his title to this great honour may require considerable qualification. What one thing, it is asked, would not have been discovered in the age of Galileo and Harvey, if Bacon had never written? What one scientific discovery can be traced to him, or to the observance of his peculiar rules? It was something, indeed, to have conceived, as clearly as he conceived it, the large and comprehensive idea of what natural knowledge must be, and must rest upon, even if he were not able to realise his idea, and were mistaken in his practical methods of reform. But great ideas and great principles need their adequate interpreter, their *vates sacer*, if they are to influence the history of mankind. This was what Bacon was to science, to that great change in the thoughts and activity of men in relation to the world of nature around them: and this is his title to the great place assigned to him. He not only understood and felt what science might be, but he was able to make others—and it was no easy task beforehand, while the wonders of discovery were yet in the future—understand and feel it too. And he was

able to do this because he was one of the most wonderful of thinkers and one of the greatest of writers. The disclosure, the interpretation, the development of that great intellectual revolution which was in the air, and which was practically carried forward in obscurity, day by day, by the fathers of modern astronomy and chemistry and physiology, had fallen to the task of a genius, second only to Shakespeare. He had the power to tell the story of what they were doing and were to do with a force of imaginative reason of which they were utterly incapable. He was able to justify their attempts and their hopes as they themselves could not. He was able to interest the world in the great prospects opening on it, but of which none but a few students had the key. The calculations of the astronomer, the investigations of the physician, were more or less a subject of talk, as curious or possibly useful employments. But that which bound them together in the unity of science, which gave them their meaning beyond themselves, which raised them to a higher level and gave them their real dignity among the pursuits of men, which forced all thinking men to see what new and unsuspected possibilities in the knowledge and in the condition of mankind were opened before them, was not Bacon's own attempts at science, not even his collections of facts and his rules of method, but that great idea of the reality and boundless worth of knowledge which Bacon's penetrating and sure intuition had discerned, and which had taken possession of his whole nature. The impulse which he gave to the progress of science came from his magnificent and varied exposition of this idea; from his series of grand and memorable generalisations

on the habits and faults of the human mind—on the difficult and yet so obvious and so natural precautions necessary to guide it in the true and hopeful track. It came from the attractiveness, the enthusiasm, and the persuasiveness of the pleading; from the clear and forcible statements, the sustained eloquence, the generous hopes, the deep and earnest purpose of the *Advancement* and the *De Augmentis*; from the nobleness, the originality, the picturesqueness, the impressive and irresistible truth of the great aphorisms of the *Novum Organum*.

THE END.





BUNYAN

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# English Men of Letters

EDITED BY JOHN MORLEY

BUNYAN





# BUNYAN

BY

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# BUNYAN.

## CHAPTER I.

### EARLY LIFE.

‘I WAS of a low and inconsiderable generation, my father’s house being of that rank that is meanest and most despised of all families in the land.’ ‘I never went to school, to Aristotle or Plato, but was brought up in my father’s house in a very mean condition, among a company of poor countrymen.’ ‘Nevertheless, I bless God that by this door He brought me into the world to partake of the grace and life that is by Christ in His Gospel.’ This is the account given of himself and his origin by a man whose writings have for two centuries affected the spiritual opinions of the English race in every part of the world more powerfully than any book or books, except the Bible.

John Bunyan was born at Elstow, a village near Bedford, in the year 1628. It was a memorable epoch in English history, for in that year the House of Commons extorted the consent of Charles I. to the Petition of Right. The stir of politics, however, did not reach the humble household into which the little boy was introduced. His father was hardly occupied in earning bread for his wife and children as a mender of pots and kettles : a tinker,

—working in neighbours' houses or at home, at such business as might be brought to him. 'The Bunyans,' says a friend, 'were of the national religion, as men of that calling commonly were.' Bunyan himself, in a passage which has been always understood to refer to his father, describes him 'as an honest poor labouring man, who, like Adam unparadised, had all the world to get his bread in, and was very careful to maintain his family.' In those days there were no village schools in England; the education of the poor was an apprenticeship to agriculture or handicraft; their religion they learnt at home or in church. Young Bunyan was more fortunate. In Bedford there was a grammar school, which had been founded in Queen Mary's time by the Lord Mayor of London, Sir William Harper. Hither, when he was old enough to walk to and fro, over the mile of road between Elstow and Bedford, the child was sent, if not to learn Aristotle and Plato, to learn at least 'to read and write according to the rate of other poor men's children.'

If religion was not taught at school, it was taught with some care in the cottages and farmhouses by parents and masters. It was common in many parts of England, as late as the end of the last century, for the farmers to gather their apprentices about them on Sunday afternoons, and to teach them the Catechism. Rude as was Bunyan's home, religious notions of some kind had been early and vividly impressed upon him. He caught, indeed, the ordinary habits of the boys among whom he was thrown. He learnt to use bad language, and he often lied. When a child's imagination is exceptionally active, the temptations to untruth are correspondingly powerful. The inventive faculty has its dangers, and Bunyan was eminently gifted in that way. He was a violent, passionate



boy besides, and thus he says of himself that for lying and swearing he had no equal, and that his parents did not sufficiently correct him. Wickedness, he declares in his own remorseful story of his early years, became a second nature to him. But the estimate which a man forms of himself in later life, if he has arrived at any strong abhorrence of moral evil, is harsher than others at the time would have been likely to have formed. Even then the poor child's conscience must have been curiously sensitive, and it revenged itself upon him in singular tortures.

'My sins,' he says, 'did so offend the Lord that even in my childhood He did scare and affright me with fearful dreams, and did terrify me with dreadful visions. I have been in my bed greatly afflicted while asleep, with apprehensions of devils and wicked spirits, who still, as I then thought, laboured to draw me away with them, of which I could never be rid. I was afflicted with thoughts of the Day of Judgment night and day, trembling at the thoughts of the fearful torments of hell fire.' When, at ten years old, he was running about with his companions in 'his sports and childish vanities,' these terrors continually recurred to him, yet 'he would not let go his sins.'

Such a boy required rather to be encouraged than checked in seeking innocent amusements. Swearing and lying were definite faults which ought to have been corrected; but his parents, perhaps, saw that there was something unusual in the child. To them he probably appeared not worse than other boys, but considerably better. They may have thought it more likely that he would conquer his own bad inclinations by his own efforts, than that they could mend him by rough rebukes.

When he left school he would naturally have been

bound apprentice, but his father brought him up at his own trade. Thus he lived at home, and grew to manhood there, forming his ideas of men and things out of such opportunities as the Elstow neighbourhood afforded.

From the time when the Reformation brought them a translation of it, the Bible was the book most read—it was often the only book which was read—in humble English homes. Familiarity with the words had not yet trampled the sacred writings into practical barrenness. No doubts or questions had yet risen about the Bible's nature or origin. It was received as the authentic word of God Himself. The Old and New Testament alike represented the world as the scene of a struggle between good and evil spirits; and thus every ordinary incident of daily life was an instance or illustration of God's Providence. This was the universal popular belief, not admitted only by the intellect, but accepted and realised by the imagination. No one questioned it, save a few speculative philosophers in their closets. The statesman in the House of Commons, the judge on the Bench, the peasant in a midland village, interpreted literally by this rule the phenomena which they experienced or saw. They not only believed that God had miraculously governed the Israelites, but they believed that as directly and immediately He governed England in the seventeenth century. They not only believed that there had been a witch at Endor, but they believed that there were witches in their own villages, who had made compacts with the devil himself. They believed that the devil still literally walked the earth like a roaring lion: that he and the evil angels were perpetually labouring to destroy the souls of men; and that God was equally busy overthrowing the devil's work, and bringing sin and crimes to eventual punishment.

In this light the common events of life were actually looked at and understood, and the air was filled with anecdotes so told as to illustrate the belief. These stories, and these experiences were Bunyan's early mental food. One of them, which had deeply impressed the imagination of the Midland counties, was the story of 'Old Tod.' This man came one day into court, in the Summer Assizes at Bedford, 'all in a dung sweat,' to demand justice upon himself as a felon. No one had accused him, but God's judgment was not to be escaped, and he was forced to accuse himself. 'My Lord,' said Old Tod to the judge, 'I have been a thief from my childhood. I have been a thief ever since. There has not been a robbery committed these many years, within so many miles of this town, but I have been privy to it.' The judge, after a conference, agreed to indict him of certain felonies which he had acknowledged. He pleaded guilty, implicating his wife along with him, and they were both hanged.

An intense belief in the moral government of the world creates what it insists upon. Horror at sin forces the sinner to confess it, and makes others eager to punish it. 'God's revenge against murder and adultery' becomes thus an actual fact, and justifies the conviction in which it rises. Bunyan was specially attentive to accounts of judgments upon swearing, to which he was himself addicted. He tells a story of a man at Wimbledon, who, after uttering some strange blasphemy, was struck with sickness, and died cursing. Another such scene he probably witnessed himself,<sup>1</sup> and never forgot. An alehouse-keeper in the neighbourhood of Elstow had a son who was half-

<sup>1</sup> The story is told by Mr. Attentive in the 'Life of Mr. Badman;' but it is almost certain that Bunyan was relating his own experience.

witted. The favourite amusement, when a party was collected drinking, was for the father to provoke the lad's temper, and for the lad to curse his father and wish the devil had him. The devil at last did have the alehouse-keeper, and rent and tore him till he died. 'I,' says Bunyan, 'was eye and ear witness of what I here say. I have heard Ned in his roguery cursing his father, and his father laughing thereat most heartily, still provoking of Ned to curse that his mirth might be increased. I saw his father also when he was possessed. I saw him in one of his fits, and saw his flesh as it was thought gathered up in an heap about the bigness of half an egg, to the unutterable torture and affliction of the old man. There was also one Freeman, who was more than an ordinary doctor, sent for to cast out the devil, and I was there when he attempted to do it. The manner whereof was this. They had the possessed in an outroom, and laid him upon his belly upon a form, with his head hanging down over the form's end. Then they bound him down thereto; which done, they set a pan of coals under his mouth, and put something therein which made a great smoke—by this means, as it was said, to fetch out the devil. There they kept the man till he was almost smothered in the smoke, but no devil came out of him, at which Freeman was somewhat abashed, the man greatly afflicted, and I made to go away wondering and fearing. In a little time, therefore, that which possessed the man carried him out of the world, according to the cursed wishes of his son.'

The wretched alehouse-keeper's life was probably sacrificed in this attempt to dispossess the devil. But the incident would naturally leave its mark on the mind of an impressionable boy. Bunyan ceased to frequent such



places after he began to lead a religious life. The story, therefore, most likely belongs to the experiences of his first youth after he left school ; and there may have been many more of a similar kind, for, except that he was steady at his trade, he grew up a wild lad, the ringleader of the village apprentices in all manner of mischief. He had no books, except a life of Sir Bevis of Southampton, which would not tend to sober him ; indeed, he soon forgot all that he had learnt at school, and took to amusements and doubtful adventures, orchard-robbing, perhaps, or poaching, since he hints that he might have brought himself within reach of the law. In the most passionate language of self-abhorrence, he accuses himself of all manner of sins, yet it is improbable that he appeared to others what in later life he appeared to himself. He judged his own conduct as he believed that it was regarded by his Maker, by whom he supposed eternal torment to have been assigned as the just retribution for the lightest offence. Yet he was never drunk. He who never forgot anything with which he could charge himself, would not have passed over drunkenness, if he could remember that he had been guilty of it ; and he distinctly asserts, also, that he was never in a single instance unchaste. In our days, a rough tinker who could say as much for himself after he had grown to manhood, would be regarded as a model of self-restraint. If, in Bedford and the neighbourhood, there was no young man more vicious than Bunyan, the moral standard of an English town in the seventeenth century must have been higher than believers in Progress will be pleased to allow.

He declares that he was without God in the world, and in the sense which he afterwards attached to the word this was probably true. But serious thoughts seldom



ceased to work in him. Dreams only reproduce the forms and feelings with which the waking imagination is most engaged. Bunyan's rest continued to be haunted with the phantoms which had terrified him when a child. He started in his sleep, and frightened the family with his cries. He saw evil spirits in monstrous shapes and fiends blowing flames out of their nostrils. 'Once,' says a biographer, who knew him well, and had heard the story of his visions from his own lips, 'he dreamed that he saw the face of heaven as it were on fire, the firmament crackling and shivering with the noise of mighty thunder, and an archangel flew in the midst of heaven, sounding a trumpet, and a glorious throne was seated in the east, whereon sat One in brightness like the morning star. Upon which, he thinking it was the end of the world, fell upon his knees and said, "Oh, Lord, have mercy on me! What shall I do? The Day of Judgment is come and I am not prepared."'

At another time 'he dreamed that he was in a pleasant place jovial and rioting, when an earthquake rent the earth, out of which came bloody flames, and the figures of men tossed up in globes of fire, and falling down again with horrible cries and shrieks and execrations, while devils mingled among them, and laughed aloud at their torments. As he stood trembling, the earth sank under him, and a circle of flames embraced him. But when he fancied he was at the point to perish, One in shining white raiment descended and plucked him out of that dreadful place, while the devils cried after him to take him to the punishment which his sins had deserved. Yet he escaped the danger, and leapt for joy when he awoke and found it was a dream.'

Mr. Southey, who thinks wisely that Bunyan's bio-

graphers have exaggerated his early faults, considers that at worst he was a sort of 'blackguard.' This, too, is a wrong word. Young village blackguards do not dream of archangels flying through the midst of heaven, nor were these imaginations invented afterwards, or rhetorically exaggerated. Bunyan was undoubtedly given to story-telling as a boy, and the recollection of it made him peculiarly scrupulous in his statements in later life. One trait he mentions of himself which no one would have thought of who had not experienced the feeling, yet every person can understand it and sympathise with it. These spectres and hobgoblins drove him wild. He says, 'I was so overcome with despair of life and heaven, that I should often wish either that there had been no hell, or that I had been a devil; supposing that they were only tormentors, and that, if it must needs be that I went thither, I might rather be a tormentor than tormented myself.'

The visions at last ceased. God left him to himself, as he puts it, and gave him over to his own wicked inclinations. He fell, he says, into all kinds of vice and ungodliness without further check. The expression is very strong, yet when we look for particulars we can find only that he was fond of games which Puritan preciseness disapproved. He had high animal spirits, and engaged in lawless enterprises. Once or twice he nearly lost his life. He is sparing of details of his outward history, for he regarded it as nothing but vanity; but his escapes from death were providences, and therefore he mentions them. He must have gone to the coast somewhere, for he was once almost drowned in a creek of the sea. He fell out of a boat into the river at another time, and it seems that he could not swim. Afterwards he seized hold of an adder, and was not bitten by it. These mercies were sent

as warnings, but he says that he was too careless to profit by them. He thought that he had forgotten God altogether, and yet it is plain that he had not forgotten. A bad young man, who has shaken off religion because it is a restraint, observes with malicious amusement the faults of persons who make a profession of religion. He infers that they do not really believe it, and only differ from their neighbours in being hypocrites. Bunyan notes this disposition in his own history of Mr. Badman. Of himself, he says : ‘ Though I could sin with delight and ease, and take pleasure in the villanies of my companions, even then, if I saw wicked things done by them that professed goodness, it would make my spirit tremble. Once, when I was in the height of my vanity, hearing one swear that was reckoned a religious man, it made my heart to ache.’

He was now seventeen, and we can form a tolerably accurate picture of him—a tall, active lad, working as his father’s apprentice, at his pots and kettles, ignorant of books, and with no notion of the world beyond what he could learn in his daily drudgery, and the talk of the alehouse and the village green ; inventing lies to amuse his companions, and swearing that they were true ; playing bowls and tipcat, ready for any reckless action, and always a leader in it, yet all the while singularly pure from the more brutal forms of vice, and haunted with feverish thoughts, which he tried to forget in amusements. It has been the fashion to take his account of himself literally, and represent him as the worst of reprobates, in order to magnify the effects of his conversion, and perhaps to make intelligible to his admiring followers the reproaches which he heaps upon himself. They may have felt that they could not be wrong in explaining his own language in the only sense in which

they could attach a meaning to it. Yet, sinner though he may have been, like all the rest of us, his sins were not the sins of coarseness and vulgarity. They were the sins of a youth of sensitive nature and very peculiar gifts : gifts which brought special temptations with them, and inclined him to be careless and desperate, yet from causes singularly unlike those which are usually operative in dissipated and uneducated boys.

It was now the year 1645. Naseby Field was near, and the first Civil War was drawing to its close. At this crisis Bunyan was, as he says, drawn to be a soldier ; and it is extremely characteristic of him and of the body to which he belonged, that he leaves us to guess on which side he served. He does not tell us himself. His friends in after life did not care to ask him, or he to inform them, or else they also thought the matter of too small importance to be worth mentioning with exactness. There were two traditions, and his biographers chose between them as we do. Close as the connection was in that great struggle between civil and religious liberty—flung as Bunyan was flung into the very centre of the conflict between the English people and the Crown and Church and aristocracy—victim as he was himself of intolerance and persecution, he never but once took any political part, and then only in signing an address to Cromwell. He never showed any active interest in political questions ; and if he spoke on such questions at all after the Restoration, it was to advise submission to the Stuart Government. By the side of the stupendous issues of human life, such miserable *rights* as men might pretend to in this world were not worth contending for. The only *right* of man that he thought much about, was the right to be eternally damned if he did not lay hold of grace. King



and subject were alike creatures whose sole significance lay in their individual immortal souls. Their relations with one another upon earth were nothing in the presence of the awful judgment which awaited them both. Thus whether Bunyan's brief career in the army was under Charles or under Fairfax must remain doubtful. Probability is on the side of his having been with the Royalists. His father was of 'the national religion.' He himself had as yet no special convictions of his own. John Gifford, the Baptist minister at Bedford, had been a Royalist. The only incident which Bunyan speaks of connected with his military experience points in the same direction. 'When I was a soldier,' he says, 'I was with others drawn out to go to such a place to besiege it. But when I was just ready to go, one of the company desired to go in my room. Coming to the siege as he stood sentinel he was shot in the heart with a musket bullet and died.' Tradition agrees that the place to which these words refer was Leicester. Leicester was stormed by the King's troops a few days before the battle of Naseby. It was recovered afterwards by the Parliamentarians, but on the second occasion there was no fighting, as it capitulated without a shot being fired. Mr. Carlyle supposes that Bunyan was not with the attacking party, but was in the town as one of the garrison, and was taken prisoner there. But this cannot be, for he says expressly that he was one of the besiegers. Legend gathers freely about eminent men, about men especially who are eminent in religion, whether they are Catholic or Protestant. Lord Macaulay is not only positive that the hero of the English Dissenters fought on the side of the Commonwealth, but he says, without a word of caution on the imperfection of the evidence, 'His Greatheart, his Captain Boanerges,



and his Captain Credence, are evidently portraits of which the originals were among those martial saints who fought and expounded in Fairfax's army.'<sup>1</sup>

If the martial saints had impressed Bunyan so deeply, it is inconceivable that he should have made no more allusion to his military service than in this brief passage. He refers to the siege and all connected with it merely as another occasion of his own providential escapes from death.

Let the truth of this be what it may, the troop to which he belonged was soon disbanded. He returned at the end of the year to his tinker's work at Elstow, much as he had left it. The saints, if he had met with saints, had not converted him. 'I sinned still,' he says, 'and grew more and more rebellious against God and careless of my own salvation.' An important change of another kind, however, lay before him. Young as he was he married. His friends advised it, for they thought that marriage would make him steady. The step was less imprudent than it would have been had Bunyan been in a higher rank of life, or had aimed at rising into it. The girl whom he chose was a poor orphan, but she had been carefully and piously brought up, and from her acceptance of him, something more may be inferred about his character. Had he been a dissolute idle scamp, it is unlikely that a respectable woman would have become his wife when he was a mere boy. His sins, whatever these were, had not injured his outward circumstances; it is clear that all along he worked skilfully and industriously at his tinkering business. He had none of the habits which bring men to beggary. From the beginning of his life to

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Bunyan*: Collected Works, vol. vii. p. 299.

the end of it he was a prudent, careful man, and, considering the station to which he belonged, a very successful man.

‘I lighted on a wife,’ he says, ‘whose father was counted godly. We came together as poor as poor might be, not having so much household stuff as a dish or a spoon between us. But she had for her portion two books, “The Plain Man’s Pathway to Heaven,” and “The Practice of Piety,” which her father had left her when he died. In these two books I sometimes read with her. I found some things pleasing to me, but all this while I met with no conviction. She often told me what a godly man her father was, how he would reprove and correct vice both in his house and among his neighbours, what a strict and holy life he lived in his day both in word and deed. These books, though they did not reach my heart, did light in me some desire to religion.’

There was still an Established Church in England, and the constitution of it had not yet been altered. The Presbyterian platform threatened to take the place of Episcopacy, and soon did take it; but the clergyman was still a priest and was still regarded with pious veneration in the country districts as a semi-supernatural being. The altar yet stood in its place, the minister still appeared in his surplice, and the Prayers of the Liturgy continued to be read or intoned. The old familiar bells, Catholic as they were in all the emotions which they suggested, called the congregation together with their musical peal, though in the midst of triumphant Puritanism. The ‘Book of Sports,’ which, under an order from Charles I., had been read regularly in Church, had in 1644 been laid under a ban; but the gloom of a Presbyterian Sunday was, is, and for ever will be detestable to the natural man; and the Elstow population gathered persistently after service

on the village green for their dancing, and their leaping, and their archery. Long habit cannot be transformed in a day by an Edict of Council, and amidst army manifestoes and battles of Marston Moor, and a king dethroned and imprisoned, old English life in Bedfordshire preserved its familiar features. These Sunday sports had been a special delight to Bunyan, and it is to them that he refers in the following passage, when speaking of his persistent wickedness. On his marriage he became regular and respectable in his habits. He says, 'I fell in with the religion of the times to go to church twice a day, very devoutly to say and sing as the others did, yet retaining my wicked life. Withal I was so overrun with the spirit of superstition that I adored with great devotion even all things, both the high place, priest, clerk, vestment, service, and what else belonging to the Church, counting all things holy therein contained, and especially the priest and clerk most happy and without doubt greatly blessed. This conceit grew so strong in my spirit, that had I but seen a priest, though never so sordid and debauched in his life, I should find my spirit fall under him, reverence, and be knit to him. Their name, their garb, and work did so intoxicate and bewitch me.'

Surely if there were no other evidence, these words would show that the writer of them had never listened to the expositions of the martial saints.

## CHAPTER II.

### CONVICTION OF SIN.

THE 'Pilgrim's Progress' is the history of the struggle of human nature to overcome temptation and shake off the bondage of sin, under the convictions which prevailed among serious men in England in the seventeenth century. The allegory is the life of its author cast in an imaginative form. Every step in Christian's journey had been first trodden by Bunyan himself; every pang of fear and shame, every spasm of despair, every breath of hope and consolation, which is there described, is but a reflexion as on a mirror from personal experience. It has spoken to the hearts of all later generations of Englishmen because it came from the heart; because it is the true record of the genuine emotions of a human soul; and to such a record the emotions of other men will respond, as one stringed instrument vibrates responsively to another. The poet's power lies in creating sympathy; but he cannot, however richly gifted, stir feelings which he has not himself known in all their intensity.

Ut ridentibus arident ita flentibus adflent  
Humani vultus. Si vis me flere dolendum est  
Primum ipsi tibi.

The religious history of man is essentially the same in all ages. It takes its rise in the duality of his nature. He

is an animal, and as an animal he desires bodily pleasure and shrinks from bodily pain. As a being capable of morality, he is conscious that for him there exists a right and wrong. Something, whatever that something may be, binds him to choose one and avoid the other. This is his religion, his religatio, his obligation, in the sense in which the Romans, from whom we take it, used the word ; and obligation implies some superior power to which man owes obedience. The conflict between his two dispositions agitates his heart, and perplexes his intellect. To do what the superior power requires of him, he must thwart his inclinations. He dreads punishment, if he neglects to do it. He invents methods by which he can indulge his appetites, and finds a substitute by which he can propitiate his invisible ruler or rulers. He offers sacrifices ; he institutes ceremonies and observances. This is the religion of the body, the religion of fear. It is what we call superstition. In his nobler moods he feels that this is but to evade the difficulty. He perceives that the sacrifice required is the sacrifice of himself. It is not the penalty for sin which he must fear, but the sin itself. He must conquer his own lower nature. He must detach his heart from his pleasures, and he must love good for its own sake, and because it is his only real good ; and this is spiritual religion or piety. Between these two forms of worship of the unseen, the human race has swayed to and fro from the first moment in which they learnt to discern between good and evil. Superstition attracts, because it is indulgent to immorality by providing means by which God can be pacified. But it carries its antidote along with it, for it keeps alive the sense of God's existence ; and when it has produced its natural effects, when the believer rests in his observances and lives practically as if



there was no God at all, the conscience again awakes. Sacrifices and ceremonies become detested as idolatry, and religion becomes conviction of sin, a fiery determination to fight with the whole soul against appetite, vanity, self-seeking, and every mean propensity which the most sensitive alarm can detect. The battle unhappily is attended with many vicissitudes. The victory, though practically it may be won, is never wholly won. The struggle brings with it every variety of emotion, alternations of humility and confidence, despondency and hope. The essence of it is always the same—the effort of the higher nature to overcome the lower. The form of it varies from period to period, according to the conditions of the time, the temperament of different people, the conception of the character of the Supreme Power, which the state of knowledge enables men to form. It will be found even when the puzzled intellect can see no light in Heaven at all, in the stern and silent fulfilment of moral duty. It will appear as enthusiasm; it will appear as asceticism. It will appear wherever there is courage to sacrifice personal enjoyment for a cause believed to be holy. We must all live. We must all, as we suppose, in one shape or other give account for our actions; and accounts of the conflict are most individually interesting when it is an open wrestle with the enemy; as we find in the penances and austerities of the Catholic saints, or when the difficulties of belief are confessed and detailed, as in David's Psalms, or in the Epistles of St. Paul. St. Paul, like the rest of mankind, found a law in his members warring against the law which was in his heart. The problem presented to him was how one was to be brought into subjection to the other, and the solution was by 'the putting on of Christ.' St. Paul's mind was

charged with the ideas of Oriental and Greek philosophy then prevalent in the Roman Empire. His hearers understood him, because he spoke in the language of the prevailing speculations. We who have not the clue cannot, perhaps, perfectly understand him; but his words have been variously interpreted as human intelligence has expanded, and have formed the basis of the two great theologies which have been developed out of Christianity. The Christian religion taught that evil could not be overcome by natural human strength. The Son of God had come miraculously upon earth, had lived a life of stainless purity, and had been offered as a sacrifice to redeem men conditionally from the power of sin. The conditions, as English Protestant theology understands them, are nowhere more completely represented than in the 'Pilgrim's Progress.' The Catholic theology, rising as it did in the two centuries immediately following St. Paul, approached probably nearer to what he really intended to say.

Catholic theology, as a system, is a development of Platonism. The Platonists had discovered that the seat of moral evil was material substance. In matter, and therefore in the human body, there was either some inherent imperfection, or some ingrained perversity and antagonism to good. The soul so long as it was attached to the body was necessarily infected by it; and as human life on earth consisted in the connection of soul and body, every single man was necessarily subject to infirmity. Catholic theology accepted the position and formulated an escape from it. The evil in matter was a fact. It was explained by Adam's sin. But there it was. The taint was inherited by all Adam's posterity. The flesh of man was incurably vitiated, and if he was to be saved a new body must be prepared for him. This Christ had done,

That Christ's body was not as other men's bodies was proved after his resurrection, when it showed itself independent of the limitations of extended substance. In virtue of these mysterious properties it became the body of the Corporate Church into which believers were admitted by baptism. The natural body was not at once destroyed, but a new element was introduced into it, by the power of which, assisted by penance and mortification, and the spiritual food of the Eucharist, the grosser qualities were gradually subdued, and the corporeal system was changed. Then body and spirit became alike pure together, and the saint became capable of obedience, so perfect as not only to suffice for himself, but to supply the wants of others. The corruptible put on incorruption. The bodies of the saints worked miracles, and their flesh was found unaffected by decay after hundreds of years.

This belief so long as it was sincerely held issued naturally in characters of extreme beauty; of beauty so great as almost to demonstrate its truth. The purpose of it, so far as it affected action, was self-conquest. Those who try with their whole souls to conquer themselves find the effort lightened by a conviction that they are receiving supernatural assistance; and the form in which the Catholic theory supposed the assistance to be given was at least perfectly innocent. But it is in the nature of human speculations, though they may have been entertained at first in entire good faith, to break down under trial, if they are not in conformity with fact. Catholic theology furnished Europe with a rule of faith and action which lasted 1500 years. For the last three centuries of that period it was changing from a religion into a superstition, till, from being the world's guide, it became its scandal. 'The body of Christ' had become a

kingdom of this world, insulting its subjects by the effrontery of its ministers, the insolence of its pretensions, the mountains of lies which it was teaching as sacred truths. Luther spoke ; and over half the Western world the Catholic Church collapsed, and a new theory of Christianity had to be constructed out of the fragments of it.

There was left behind a fixed belief in God and in the Bible as His revealed word, in a future judgment, in the fall of man, in the atonement made for sin by the death of Christ, and in the new life which was made possible by His resurrection. The change was in the conception of the method by which the atonement was imagined to be efficacious. The material or sacramental view of it, though it lingered inconsistently in the mind even of Luther himself, was substantially gone. New ideas adopted in enthusiasm are necessarily extreme. The wrath of God was held to be inseparably and eternally attached to every act of sin, however infirm the sinner. That his nature could be changed, and that he could be mystically strengthened by incorporation with Christ's body in the Church was contrary to experience, and was no longer credible. The conscience of every man, in the Church or out of it, told him that he was daily and hourly offending. God's law demanded a life of perfect obedience, eternal death being the penalty of the lightest breach of it. No human being was capable of such perfect obedience. He could not do one single act which would endure so strict a scrutiny. All mankind were thus included under sin. The Catholic Purgatory was swept away. It had degenerated into a contrivance for feeding the priests with money, and it implied that human nature could in itself be renovated by its own sufferings. Thus nothing lay before the whole race except everlasting



reprobation. But the door of hope had been opened on the cross of Christ. Christ had done what man could never do. He had fulfilled the law perfectly. God was ready to accept Christ's perfect righteousness as a substitute for the righteousness which man was required to present to him, but could not. The conditions of acceptance were no longer sacraments or outward acts, or lame and impotent efforts after a moral life, but faith in what Christ had done ; a complete self-abnegation, a resigned consciousness of utter unworthiness, and an unreserved acceptance of the mercy held out through the Atonement. It might have been thought that since man was born so weak that it was impossible for him to do what the law required, consideration would be had for his infirmity ; that it was even dangerous to attribute to the Almighty a character so arbitrary as that He would exact an account from his creatures which the creature's necessary inadequacy rendered him incapable of meeting. But the impetuosity of the new theology would listen to no such excuses. God was infinitely pure, and nothing impure could stand in his sight. Man, so long as he rested on merit of his own, must be for ever excluded from his presence. He must accept grace on the terms on which it was held out to him. Then and then only God would extend his pity to him. He was no longer a child of wrath : he was God's child. His infirmities remained, but they were constantly obliterated by the merits of Christ. And he had strength given to him, partially, at least, to overcome temptation, under which, but for that strength, he would have fallen. Though nothing which he could do could deserve reward, yet he received grace in proportion to the firmness of his belief ; and his efforts after obedience, imperfect though they might be, were



accepted for Christ's sake. A good life, or a constant effort after a good life, was still the object which a man was bound to labour after. Though giving no claim to pardon, still less for reward, it was the necessary fruit of a sense of what Christ had done, and of love and gratitude towards him. Good works were the test of saving faith, and if there were no signs of them, the faith was barren : it was not real faith at all.

This was the Puritan belief in England in the seventeenth century. The reason starts at it, but all religion is paradoxical to reason. God hates sin, yet sin exists. He is omnipotent, yet evil is not overcome. The will of man is free, or there can be no guilt, yet the action of the will, so far as experience can throw light on its operation, is as much determined by antecedent causes as every other natural force. Prayer is addressed to a Being assumed to be omniscient, who knows better what is good for us than we can know, who sees our thoughts without requiring to hear them in words, whose will is fixed and cannot be changed. Prayer, therefore, in the eye of reason is an impertinence. The Puritan theology is not more open to objection on the ground of unreasonableness than the Catholic theology or any other which regards man as answerable to God for his conduct. We must judge of a creed by its effects on character, as we judge of the wholesomeness of food as it conduces to bodily health ; and the creed which swept like a wave through England at that time, and recommended itself to the noblest and most powerful intellects, produced also in those who accepted it a horror of sin, an enthusiasm for justice, purity, and manliness, which can be paralleled only in the first age of Christianity. Certainly there never was such a theory to take man's conceit out of him. He was a

miserable wretch, so worthless at his best as to deserve everlasting perdition. If he was to be saved at all, he could be saved only by the unmerited grace of God. In himself he was a child of the devil; and hell, not in metaphor, but in hard and palpable fact, inevitably waited for him. This belief, or the affectation of this belief, continues to be professed, but without a realisation of its tremendous meaning. The form of words is repeated by multitudes who do not care to think what they are saying. Who can measure the effect of such a conviction upon men who were in earnest about their souls, who were assured that this account of their situation was actually true, and on whom, therefore, it bore with increasing weight in proportion to their sincerity?

With these few prefatory words, I now return to Bunyan. He had begun to go regularly to church, and by Church he meant the Church of England. The change in the constitution of it, even when it came, did not much alter its practical character in the country districts. At Elstow, as we have seen, there was still a high place; there was still a liturgy; there was still a surplice. The Church of England is a compromise between the old theology and the new. The Bishops have the apostolical succession, but many of them disbelieve that they derive any virtue from it. The clergyman is either a priest who can absolve men from sins, or he is a minister as in other Protestant communions. The sacraments are either means of grace, or mere outward signs. A Christian is either saved by baptism, or saved by faith, as he pleases to believe. In either case he may be a member of the Church of England. The effect of such uncertain utterances is to leave an impression that in defining such points closely, theologians are laying down lines of doctrines

about subjects of which they know nothing, that the real truth of religion lies in what is common to the two theories, the obligation to lead a moral life ; and to this sensible view of their functions the bishops and clergy had in fact gradually arrived in the last century, when the revival of what is called earnestness, first in the form of Evangelicalism, and then of Anglo-Catholicism, awoke again the old controversies.

To a man of fervid temperament suddenly convinced of sin, incapable of being satisfied with ambiguous answers to questions which mean life or death to him, the Church of England has little to say. If he is quiet and reasonable, he finds in it all that he desires. Enthusiastic ages and enthusiastical temperaments demand something more complete and consistent. The clergy under the Long Parliament caught partially the tone of the prevailing spirit. The reading of the 'Book of Sports' had been interdicted, and from their pulpits they lectured their congregations on the ungodliness of the Sabbath amusements. But the congregations were slow to listen, and the sports went on.

One Sunday morning, when Bunyan was at church with his wife, a sermon was delivered on this subject. It seemed to be especially addressed to himself, and it much affected him. He shook off the impression, and after dinner he went as usual to the green. He was on the point of striking at a ball when the thought rushed across his mind, Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to Heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell? He looked up. The reflection of his own emotion was before him in visible form. He imagined that he saw Christ himself looking down at him from the sky. But he concluded that it was too late for him to repent. He was past pardon. He

was sure to be damned, and he might as well be damned for many sins as for few. Sin at all events was pleasant, the only pleasant thing that he knew, therefore he would take his fill of it. The sin was the game, and nothing but the game. He continued to play, but the Puritan sensitiveness had taken hold of him. An artificial offence had become a real offence when his conscience was wounded by it. He was reckless and desperate.

‘This temptation of the devil,’ he says, ‘is more usual among poor creatures than many are aware of. It continued with me about a month or more; but one day as I was standing at a neighbour’s shop-window, and there cursing and swearing after my wonted manner, there sate within the woman of the house and heard me, who, though she was a loose and ungodly wretch, protested that I swore and cursed at such a rate that she trembled to hear me. I was able to spoil all the youths in a whole town. At this reproof I was silenced and put to secret shame, and that too, as I thought, before the God of Heaven. I stood hanging down my head and wishing that I might be a little child that my father might learn me to speak without this wicked sin of swearing, for, thought I, I am so accustomed to it that it is vain to think of a reformation.’

These words have been sometimes taken as a reflection on Bunyan’s own father, as if he had not sufficiently checked the first symptoms of a bad habit. If this was so, too much may be easily made of it. The language in the homes of ignorant workmen is seldom select. They have not a large vocabulary, and the words which they use do not mean what they seem to mean. But so sharp and sudden remorse speaks remarkably for Bunyan himself. At this time he could have been barely twenty years



old, and already he was quick to see when he was doing wrong, to be sorry for it, and to wish that he could do better. Vain the effort seemed to him, yet from that moment 'he did leave off swearing to his own great wonder,' and he found 'that he could speak better and more pleasantly than he did before.'

It lies in the nature of human advance on the road of improvement, that, whatever be a man's occupation, be it handicraft, or art, or knowledge, or moral conquest of self, at each forward step which he takes he grows more conscious of his shortcomings. It is thus with his whole career, and those who rise highest are least satisfied with themselves. Very simply Bunyan tells the story of his progress. On his outward history, on his business and his fortunes with it, he is totally silent. Worldly interests were not worth mentioning. He is solely occupied with his rescue from spiritual perdition. Soon after he had profited by the woman's rebuke, he fell in 'with a poor man that made profession of religion and talked pleasantly of the Scriptures.' Earnestness in such matters was growing common among English labourers. Under his new friend's example, Bunyan 'betook him to the Bible, and began to take great pleasure in reading it,' but especially, as he admits frankly (and most people's experience will have been the same), 'especially the historical part; for as for St. Paul's Epistles and Scriptures of that nature, he could not away with them, being as yet ignorant of the corruption of his nature, or of the want and worth of Jesus Christ to save him.'

Not as yet understanding these mysteries, he set himself to reform his life. He became strict with himself in word and deed. 'He set the Commandments before him for his way to Heaven.' 'He thought if he could but keep



them pretty well he should have comfort.' If now and then he broke one of them, he suffered in conscience ; he repented of his fault, he made good resolutions for the future and struggled to carry them out. 'His neighbours took him to be a new man, and marvelled at the alteration.' Pleasure of any kind, even the most innocent, he considered to be a snare to him, and he abandoned it ; he had been fond of dancing, but he gave it up ; music and singing he parted with, though it distressed him to leave them. Of all amusements, that in which he had most delighted had been in ringing the bells in Elstow church tower. With his bells he could not part all at once ; he would no longer ring himself : but when his friends were enjoying themselves with the ropes, he could not help going now and then to the tower door to look on and listen ; but he feared at last that the steeple might fall upon him and kill him. We call such scruples in these days exaggerated and fantastic. We are no longer in danger ourselves of suffering from similar emotions. Whether we are the better for having got rid of them, will be seen in the future history of our race.

Notwithstanding his struggles and his sacrifices, Bunyan found that they did not bring him the peace which he expected. A man can change his outward conduct, but if he is in earnest he comes in sight of other features in himself which he cannot change so easily ; the meanesses, the paltrinesses, the selfishnesses which haunt him in spite of himself, which start out upon him at moments the most unlooked for, which taint the best of his actions and make him loathe and hate himself. Bunyan's life was now for so young a person a model of correctness ; but he had no sooner brought his actions straight than he discovered that he was admiring and approving of himself.

No situation is more humiliating, none brings with it a feeling of more entire hopelessness. 'All this while,' he says, 'I knew not Christ, nor grace, nor faith, nor hope, and had I then died my state had been most fearful. I was but a poor painted hypocrite, going about to establish my own righteousness.'

Like his own Pilgrim, he had the burden on his back of his conscious unworthiness. How was he to be rid of it?

'One day in a street in Bedford, as he was at work in his calling, he fell in with three or four poor women sitting at a door in the sun talking about the things of God.' He was himself at that time 'a brisk talker' about the matters of religion, and he joined these women. Their expressions were wholly unintelligible to him. 'They were speaking of the wretchedness of their own hearts, of their unbelief, of their miserable state. They did condemn, slight, and abhor their own righteousness as filthy and insufficient to do them any good. They spoke of a new birth and of the work of God in their hearts, which comforted and strengthened them against the temptations of the Devil.'

The language of the poor women has lost its old meaning. They themselves, if they were alive, would not use it any longer. The conventional phrases of Evangelical Christianity ring untrue in a modern ear like a cracked bell. We have grown so accustomed to them as a cant, that we can hardly believe that they ever stood for sincere convictions. Yet these forms were once alive with the profoundest of all moral truths; a truth not of a narrow theology, but which lies at the very bottom of the well, at the fountain-head of human morality; namely, that a man who would work out his salvation must cast out self, though he rend his heart-strings in doing it; not

love of self-indulgence only, but self-applause, self-confidence, self-conceit and vanity, desire or expectation of reward ; self in all the subtle ingenuities with which it winds about the soul. In one dialect or another, he must recognise that he is himself a poor creature not worth thinking of, or he will not take the first step towards excellence in any single thing which he undertakes.

Bunyan left the women and went about his work, but their talk went with him. 'He was greatly affected.' 'He saw that he wanted the true tokens of a godly man.' He sought them out and spoke with them again and again. He could not stay away ; and the more he went the more he questioned his condition.

'I found two things,' he says, 'at which I did sometimes marvel, considering what a blind ungodly wretch but just before I was ; one a great softness and tenderness of heart, which caused me to fall under the conviction of what, by Scripture, they asserted ; the other a great bending of my mind to a continual meditating on it. My mind was now like a horse-leech at the vein, still crying Give, give ; so fixed on eternity and on the kingdom of heaven (though I knew but little), that neither pleasure, nor profit, nor persuasion, nor threats could loosen it or make it let go its hold. It is in very deed a certain truth ; it would have been then as difficult for me to have taken my mind from heaven to earth, as I have found it often since to get it from earth to heaven.'

Ordinary persons who are conscious of trying to do right, who resist temptations, are sorry when they slip, and determine to be more on their guard for the future, are well contented with the condition which they have reached. They are respectable, they are right-minded in common things, they fulfil their every-day duties to their

families and to society with a sufficiency for which the world speaks well of them, as indeed it ought to speak ; and they themselves acquiesce in the world's verdict. Any passionate agitation about the state of their souls they consider unreal and affected. Such men may be amiable in private life, good neighbours, and useful citizens ; but be their talents what they may, they could not write a ' Pilgrim's Progress,' or ever reach the Delectable Mountains, or, even be conscious that such mountains exist.

Bunyan was on the threshold of the higher life. He knew that he was a very poor creature. He longed to rise to something better. He was a mere ignorant, untaught mechanic. He had not been to school with Aristotle and Plato. He could not help himself or lose himself in the speculations of poets and philosophers. He had only the Bible, and studying the Bible he found that the wonder-working power in man's nature was Faith. Faith ! What was it ? What did it mean ? Had he faith ? He was but ' a poor sot,' and yet he thought that he could not be wholly without it. The Bible told him that if he had faith as a grain of mustard seed, he could work miracles. He did not understand Oriental metaphors ; here was a simple test which could be at once applied.

' One day,' he writes, ' as I was between Elstow and Bedford, the temptation was hot upon me to try if I had faith by doing some miracle. I must say to the puddles that were in the horse-pads, " be dry," and truly at one time I was agoing to say so indeed. But just as I was about to speak, the thought came into my mind : Go under yonder hedge first and pray that God would make you able. But when I had concluded to pray, this came hot upon me, that if I prayed and came again and tried



to do it, and yet did nothing notwithstanding, then be sure I had no faith but was a castaway and lost. Nay, thought I, if it be so, I will never try it yet, but will stay a little longer. Thus was I tossed between the Devil and my own ignorance, and so perplexed at some times that I could not tell what to do.'

Common sense will call this disease, and will think impatiently that the young tinker would have done better to attend to his business. But it must be observed that Bunyan was attending to his business, toiling all the while with grimed hands over his pots and kettles. No one ever complained that the pots and kettles were ill-mended. It was merely that being simple-minded, he found in his Bible that besides earning his bread he had to save or lose his soul. Having no other guide he took its words literally, and the directions puzzled him.

He grew more and more unhappy—more lowly in his own eyes—

‘Wishing him like to those more rich in hope’—

like the women who were so far beyond him on the heavenly road. He was a poet without knowing it, and his gifts only served to perplex him further. His speculations assumed bodily forms which he supposed to be actual visions. He saw his poor friends sitting on the sunny side of a high mountain refreshing themselves in the warmth, while he was shivering in frost and snow and mist. The mountain was surrounded by a wall, through which he tried to pass, and searched long in vain for an opening through it. At last he found one, very straight and narrow, through which he struggled after desperate efforts. ‘It showed him,’ he said, ‘that none could enter into life but those who were in downright earnest, and unless they left the wicked world behind



them, for here was only room for body and soul, but not for body and soul and sin.' The vision brought him no comfort, for it passed away and left him still on the wrong side : a little comfortable self-conceit would have set him at rest. But, like all real men, Bunyan had the worst opinion of himself. He looked at his Bible again. He found that he must be elected. Was he elected ? He could as little tell as whether he had faith. He knew that he longed to be elected, but 'the Scripture trampled on his desire,' for it said, 'It is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy ;' therefore, unless God had chosen him his labour was in vain. The Devil saw his opportunity ; the Devil among his other attributes must have possessed that of omnipresence, for whenever any human soul was in straits, he was personally at hand to take advantage of it.

'It may be that you are not elected,' the tempter said to Bunyan. 'It may be so indeed,' thought he. 'Why then,' said Satan, 'you had as good leave off and strive no farther ; for if indeed you should not be elected and chosen of God, there is no talk of your being saved.'

A comforting text suggested itself. 'Look at the generations of old ; did any ever trust in the Lord and was confounded ?' But these exact words, unfortunately, were only to be found in the Apocrypha. And there was a further distressing possibility, which has occurred to others besides Bunyan. Perhaps the day of grace was passed. It came on him one day as he walked in the country that perhaps those good people in Bedford were all that the Lord would save in those parts, and that he came too late for the blessing. True, Christ had said, 'Compel them to come in, for yet there is room.' It might be 'that when Christ spoke those words,' He

was thinking of him—him among the rest that he had chosen, and had meant to encourage him. But Bunyan was too simply modest to gather comfort from such aspiring thoughts. He desired to be converted, craved for it, longed for it with all his heart and soul. ‘Could it have been gotten for gold,’ he said, ‘what would I not have given for it. Had I had a whole world it had all gone ten thousand times over for this, that my soul might have been in a converted state. But, oh! I was made sick by that saying of Christ: “He called to Him whom He would, and they came to Him.” I feared He would not call me.’

Election, conversion, day of grace, coming to Christ, have been pawed and fingered by unctuous hands for now two hundred years. The bloom is gone from the flower. The plumage, once shining with hues direct from heaven, is soiled and bedraggled. The most solemn of all realities have been degraded into the passwords of technical theology. In Bunyan’s day, in camp and council chamber, in High Courts of Parliament, and among the poor drudges in English villages, they were still radiant with spiritual meaning. The dialect may alter; but if man is more than a brief floating bubble on the eternal river of time; if there be really an immortal part of him which need not perish; and if his business on earth is to save it from perishing, he will still try to pierce the mountain barrier. He will still find the work as hard as Bunyan found it. We live in days of progress and enlightenment; nature on a hundred sides has unlocked her storehouses of knowledge. But she has furnished no ‘open sesame’ to bid the mountain gate fly wide which leads to conquest of self. There is still no passage there for ‘body and soul and sin.’

## CHAPTER III.

### GRACE ABOUNDING.

THE women in Bedford, to whom Bunyan had opened his mind, had been naturally interested in him. Young and rough as he was, he could not have failed to impress anyone who conversed with him with a sense that he was a remarkable person. They mentioned him to Mr. Gifford, the minister of the Baptist Church at Bedford. John Gifford had, at the beginning of the Civil War, been a loose young officer in the king's army. He had been taken prisoner when engaged in some exploit which was contrary to the usages of war. A court-martial had sentenced him to death, and he was to have been shot in a few hours, when he broke out of his prison with his sister's help, and, after various adventures, settled at Bedford as a doctor. The near escape had not sobered him. He led a disorderly life, drinking and gambling, till the loss of a large sum of money startled him into seriousness. In the language of the time he became convinced of sin, and joined the Baptists, the most thorough-going and consistent of all the Protestant sects. If the Sacrament of Baptism is not a magical form, but is a personal act, in which the baptised person devotes himself to Christ's service, to baptise children at an age when

they cannot understand what they are doing may well seem irrational and even impious.

Gifford, who was now the head of the Baptist community in the town, invited Bunyan to his house, and explained the causes of his distress to him. He was a lost sinner. It was true that he had parted with his old faults, and was leading a new life. But his heart was unchanged ; his past offences stood in record against him. He was still under the wrath of God, miserable in his position, and therefore miserable in mind. He must become sensible of his lost state, and lay hold of the only remedy, or there was no hope for him.

There was no difficulty in convincing Bunyan that he was in a bad way. He was too well aware of it already. In a work of fiction, the conviction would be followed immediately by consoling grace. In the actual experience of a living human soul, the medicine operates less pleasantly.

‘I began,’ he says, ‘to see something of the vanity and inward wretchedness of my wicked heart, for as yet I knew no great matter therein. But now it began to be discovered unto me, and to work for wickedness as it never did before. Lusts and corruptions would strongly put themselves forth within me in wicked thoughts and desires which I did not regard before. Whereas, before, my soul was full of longing after God ; now my heart began to hanker after every foolish vanity.’

Constitutions differ. Mr. Gifford’s treatment, if it was ever good for any man, was too sharp for Bunyan. The fierce acid which had been poured into his wounds set them all festering again. He frankly admits that he was now farther from conversion than before. His heart, do what he would, refused to leave off desiring forbidden pleasures

and while this continued, he supposed that he was still under the law, and must perish by it. He compared himself to the child who, as he was being brought to Christ, was thrown down by the devil and wallowed foaming. A less healthy nature might have been destroyed by these artificially created and exaggerated miseries. He supposed he was given over to unbelief and wickedness, and yet he relates with touching simplicity :—

‘As to the act of sinning I was never more tender than now. I durst not take up a pin or a stick, though but so big as a straw, for my conscience now was sore and would smart at every touch. I could not tell how to speak my words for fear I should misplace them.’

But the care with which he watched his conduct availed him nothing. He was on a morass ‘that shook if he did but stir,’ and he was ‘there left both of God and Christ and the Spirit, and of all good things.’ Behind him lay the faults of his childhood and youth, every one of which he believed to be recorded against him. Within were his disobedient inclinations, which he conceived to be the presence of the Devil in his heart. If he was to be presented clean of stain before God he must have a perfect righteousness which was to be found only in Christ, and Christ had rejected him. ‘My original and inward pollution,’ he writes, ‘was my plague and my affliction. I was more loathsome in my own eyes than was a toad, and I thought I was so in God’s eyes too. I thought every one had a better heart than I had. I could have changed heart with anybody. I thought none but the Devil himself could equal me for inward wickedness and pollution. Sure, thought I, I am given up to the Devil and to a reprobate mind ; and thus I continued for a long while, even for some years together.’



And all the while the world went on so quietly ; these things over which Bunyan was so miserable not seeming to trouble anyone except himself ; and, as if they had no existence except on Sundays and in pious talk. Old people were hunting after the treasures of this life, as if they were never to leave the earth. Professors of religion complained when they lost fortune or health ; what were fortune and health to the awful possibilities which lay beyond the grave ? To Bunyan the future life of Christianity was a reality as certain as the next day's sunrise ; and he could have been happy on bread and water if he could have felt himself prepared to enter it. Every created being seemed better off than he was. He was sorry that God had made him a man. He ' blessed the condition of the birds, beasts, and fishes, for they had not a sinful nature. They were not obnoxious to the wrath of God. They were not to go to hell-fire after death.' He recalled the texts which spoke of Christ and forgiveness. He tried to persuade himself that Christ cared for him. He could have talked of Christ's love and mercy ' even to the very crows which sate on the ploughed land before him.' But he was too sincere to satisfy himself with formulas and phrases. He could not, he would not, profess to be convinced that things would go well with him when he was not convinced. Cold spasms of doubt laid hold of him—doubts, not so much of his own salvation, as of the truth of all that he had been taught to believe ; and the problem had to be fought and grappled with, which lies in the intellectual nature of every genuine man, whether he be an *Æschylus* or a *Shakespeare*, or a poor working *Bedfordshire* mechanic. No honest soul can look out upon the world and see it as it really is, without the question rising in him whether there be any God that

governs it at all. No one can accept the popular notion of heaven and hell as actually true, without being as terrified as Bunyan was. We go on as we do, and attend to our business and enjoy ourselves, because the words have no real meaning to us. Providence in its kindness leaves most of us unblessed or uncursed with natures of too fine a fibre.

Bunyan was hardly dealt with. 'Whole floods of blasphemies,' he says, 'against God, Christ, and the Scriptures were poured upon my spirit; questions against the very being of God and of his only beloved Son, as whether there was in truth a God or Christ, or no, and whether the Holy Scriptures were not rather a fable and cunning story than the holy and pure Word of God.'

'How can you tell,' the tempter whispered, 'but that the Turks have as good a Scripture to prove their Mahomet the Saviour, as we have to prove our Jesus is? Could I think that so many tens of thousands in so many countries and kingdoms should be without the knowledge of the right way to heaven, if there were indeed a heaven, and that we who lie in a corner of the earth, should alone be blessed therewith. Every one doth think his own religion the rightest, both Jews, Moors, and Pagans; and how if all our faith, and Christ, and Scripture should be but "a think so" too.' St. Paul spoke positively. Bunyan saw shrewdly that on St. Paul the weight of the whole Christian theory really rested. But 'how could he tell but that S. Paul, being a subtle and cunning man, might give himself up to deceive with strong delusions?' 'He was carried away by such thoughts as by a whirlwind.'

His belief in the active agency of the Devil in human affairs, of which he supposed that he had witnessed instances, was no doubt a great help to him. If he could

have imagined that his doubts or misgivings had been suggested by a desire for truth, they would have been harder to bear. More than ever he was convinced that he was possessed by the devil. He 'compared himself to a child carried off by a gipsy.' 'Kick sometimes I did,' he says, 'and scream, and cry, but yet I was as bound in the wings of temptation, and the wind would bear me away.' 'I blessed the dog and toad, and counted the condition of everything that God had made far better than this dreadful state of mine. The dog or horse had no soul to perish under the everlasting weight of hell for sin, as mine was like to do.'

Doubts about revelation and the truth of Scripture were more easy to encounter then than they are at present. Bunyan was protected by want of learning, and by a powerful predisposition to find the objections against the credibility of the Gospel history to be groundless. Critical investigation had not as yet analysed the historical construction of the sacred books, and scepticism, as he saw it in people round him, did actually come from the devil, that is from a desire to escape the moral restraints of religion. The wisest, noblest, best instructed men in England, at that time regarded the Bible as an authentic communication from God, and as the only foundation for law and civil society. The masculine sense and strong modest intellect of Bunyan ensured his acquiescence in an opinion so powerfully supported. Fits of uncertainty recurred even to the end of his life; it must be so with men who are honestly in earnest; but his doubts were of course only intermittent, and his judgment was in the main satisfied that the Bible was, as he had been taught, the Word of God. This, however, helped him little; for in the Bible he read his

own condemnation. The weight which pressed him down was the sense of his unworthiness. What was he that God should care for him? He fancied that he heard God saying to the angels, 'This poor, simple wretch doth hanker after me, as if I had nothing to do with my mercy but to bestow it on such as he. Poor fool, how art thou deceived! It is not for such as thee to have favour with the Highest.'

Miserable as he was, he clung to his misery as the one link which connected him with the object of his longings. If he had no hope of heaven, he was at least distracted that he must lose it. He was afraid of dying, yet he was still more afraid of continuing to live; lest the impression should wear away through time, and occupation and other interests should turn his heart away to the world, and thus his wounds might cease to pain him.

Readers of the 'Pilgrim's Progress' sometimes ask with wonder, why, after Christian had been received into the narrow gate, and had been set forward upon his way, so many trials and dangers still lay before him. The answer is simply that Christian *was* a pilgrim, that the journey of life still lay before him, and at every step temptations would meet him in new, unexpected shapes. St. Anthony in his hermitage was beset by as many fiends as had ever troubled him when in the world. Man's spiritual existence is like the flight of a bird in the air; he is sustained only by effort, and when he ceases to exert himself he falls. There are intervals, however, of comparative calm, and to one of these the storm-tossed Bunyan was now approaching. He had passed through the Slough of Despond. He had gone astray after Mr. Legality, and the rocks had almost overwhelmed him. Evangelist now found him and put him right again, and



he was to be allowed a breathing space at the Interpreter's house. As he was at his ordinary daily work his mind was restlessly busy. Verses of Scripture came into his head, sweet while present, but like Peter's sheet caught up again into heaven. We may have heard all our lives of Christ. Words and ideas with which we have been familiar from childhood are trodden into paths as barren as sand. Suddenly, we know not how, the meaning flashes upon us. The seed has found its way into some corner of our minds where it can germinate. The shell breaks, the cotyledons open, and the plant of faith is alive. So it was now to be with Bunyan.

'One day,' he says, 'as I was travelling into the country, musing on the wickedness of my heart, and considering the enmity that was in me to God, the Scripture came into my mind, "He hath made peace through the blood of His cross." I saw that the justice of God and my sinful soul could embrace and kiss each other. I was ready to swoon, not with grief and trouble, but with solid joy and peace.' Everything became clear: the Gospel history, the birth, the life, the death of the Saviour; how gently he gave himself to be nailed on the cross for his (Bunyan's) sins. 'I saw Him in the spirit,' he goes on, 'a Man on the right hand of the Father, pleading for me, and have seen the manner of His coming from Heaven to judge the world with glory.'

The sense of guilt which had so oppressed him was now a key to the mystery. 'God,' he says, 'suffered me to be afflicted with temptations concerning these things, and then revealed them to me.' He was crushed to the ground by the thought of his wickedness; 'the Lord showed him the death of Christ, and lifted the weight away.'



Now he thought he had a personal evidence from Heaven that he was really saved. Before this, he had lain trembling at the mouth of hell ; now he was so far away from it that he could scarce tell where it was. He fell in at this time with a copy of Luther's commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, 'so old that it was like to fall to pieces.' Bunyan found in it the exact counterpart of his own experience : 'of all the books that he had ever met with, it seemed to him the most fit for a wounded conscience.'

Everything was supernatural with him : when a bad thought came into his mind, it was the devil that put it there. These breathings of peace he regarded as the immediate voice of his Saviour. Alas ! the respite was but short. He had hoped that his troubles were over, when the tempter came back upon him in the most extraordinary form which he had yet assumed. Bunyan had himself left the door open ; the evil spirits could only enter 'Mansoul' through the owner's negligence, but once in, they could work their own wicked will. How it happened will be told afterwards. The temptation itself must be described first. Never was a nature more perversely ingenious in torturing itself.

He had gained Christ, as he called it. He was now tempted 'to sell and part with this most blessed Christ, to exchange Him for the things of this life—for anything.' If there had been any real prospect of worldly advantage before Bunyan, which he could have gained by abandoning his religious profession, the words would have had a meaning ; but there is no hint or trace of any prospect of the kind ; nor in Bunyan's position could there have been. The temptation, as he called it, was a freak of fancy : fancy resenting the minuteness with which he

watched his own emotions. And yet he says, 'It lay upon me for a year, and did follow me so continually that I was not rid of it one day in a month, sometimes not an hour in many days together, unless when I was asleep. I could neither eat my food, stoop for a pin, chop a stick, or cast my eye to look on this or that, but still the temptation would come, "Sell Christ for this, sell Him for that! Sell Him! Sell Him!"'

He had been haunted before with a notion that he was under a spell; that he had been fated to commit the unpardonable sin; and he was now thinking of Judas, who had been admitted to Christ's intimacy, and had then betrayed him. Here it was before him—the very thing which he had so long dreaded. If his heart did but consent for a moment, the deed was done. His doom had overtaken him. He wrestled with the thought as it rose, thrust it from him 'with his hands and elbows,' body and mind convulsed together in a common agony. As fast as the destroyer said, 'Sell Him,' Bunyan said, 'I will not; I will not; I will not, not for thousands, thousands, thousands of worlds!' One morning as he lay in his bed, the voice came again, and would not be driven away. Bunyan fought against it, till he was out of breath. He fell back exhausted, and without conscious action of his will, the fatal sentence passed through his brain, 'Let Him go if He will.'

That the 'selling Christ' was a bargain in which he was to lose all and receive nothing is evident from the form in which he was overcome. Yet if he had gained a fortune by fraud or forgery, he could not have been more certain that he had destroyed himself.

Satan had won the battle, and he, 'as a bird shot from a tree, had fallen into guilt and despair.' He got

out of bed, 'and went moping into the fields,' where he wandered for two hours, 'as a man bereft of life, and now past recovering,' 'bound over to eternal punishment.' He shrank under the hedges, 'in guilt and sorrow, bemoaning the hardness of his fate.' In vain the words now came back that had so comforted him, 'The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.' They had no application to him. He had acquired his birthright, but, like Esau, he had sold it, and could not any more find place for repentance. 'True it was said that 'all manner of sins and blasphemies should be forgiven unto men,' but only such sins and blasphemies as had been committed in the natural state. Bunyan had received grace, and after receiving it, had sinned against the Holy Ghost.

It was done, and nothing could undo it. David had received grace, and had committed murder and adultery after it. But murder and adultery, bad as they might be, were only transgressions of the law of Moses. Bunyan had sinned against the Mediator himself, 'he had sold his Saviour.' One sin, and only one there was which could not be pardoned, and he had been guilty of it. Peter had sinned against grace, and even after he had been warned. Peter, however, had but denied his Master. Bunyan had sold him. He was no David or Peter, he was Judas. It was very hard. Others naturally as bad as he had been saved. Why had he been picked out to be made a Son of Perdition? A Judas! Was there any point in which he was better than Judas? Judas had sinned with deliberate purpose: he 'in a fearful hurry,' and 'against prayer and striving.' But there might be more ways than one of committing the unpardonable sin, and there might be degrees of it. It was a dreadful condition. The old doubts came back.

‘I was now ashamed,’ he says, ‘that I should be like such an ugly man as Judas. I thought how loathsome I should be to all the saints at the Day of Judgment. I was tempted to content myself by receiving some false opinion, as that there should be no such thing as the Day of Judgment, that we should not rise again, that sin was no such grievous thing, the tempter suggesting that if these things should be indeed true, yet to believe otherwise would yield me ease for the present. If I must perish, I need not torment myself beforehand.’

Judas ! Judas ! was now for ever before his eyes. So identified he was with Judas that he felt at times as if his breastbone was bursting. A mark like Cain’s was on him. In vain he searched again through the catalogue of pardoned sinners. Manasseh had consulted wizards and familiar spirits. Manasseh had burnt his children in the fire to devils. He had found mercy ; but, alas ! Manasseh’s sins had nothing of the nature of selling the Saviour. To have sold the Saviour ‘was a sin bigger than the sins of a country, of a kingdom, or of the whole world—not all of them together could equal it.’

His brain was overstrained, it will be said. Very likely. It is to be remembered, however, who and what he was, and that he had overstrained it in his eagerness to learn what he conceived his Maker to wish him to be—a form of anxiety not common in this world. The cure was as remarkable as the disorder. One day he was ‘in a good man’s shop,’ still ‘afflicting himself with self-  
abhorrence,’ when something seemed to rush in through an open window, and he heard a voice saying, ‘Didst ever refuse to be justified by the blood of Christ ?’ Bunyan shared the belief of his time. He took the system of things as the Bible represented it ; but his strong com-



mon sense put him on his guard against being easily credulous. He thought at the time that the voice was supernatural. After twenty years he said modestly that he 'could not make a judgment of it.' The effect, any way, was as if an angel had come to him and had told him that there was still hope. Hapless as his condition was, he might still pray for mercy, and might possibly find it. He tried to pray, and found it very hard. The devil whispered again that God was tired of him; God wanted to be rid of him and his importunities, and had, therefore, allowed him to commit this particular sin that he might hear no more of him. He remembered Esau, and thought that this might be too true: 'the saying about Esau was a flaming sword barring the way of the tree of life to him.' Still he would not give in. 'I can but die,' he said to himself, 'and if it must be so, it shall be said that such an one died at the feet of Christ in prayer.'

He was torturing himself with illusions. Most of the saints in the Catholic Calendar have done the same. The most remorseless philosopher can hardly refuse a certain admiration for this poor uneducated village lad struggling so bravely in the theological spider's web. The 'Professors' could not comfort him, having never experienced similar distresses in their own persons. He consulted 'an Antient Christian,' telling him that he feared that he had sinned against the Holy Ghost. The Antient Christian answered gravely that he thought so too. The devil having him at advantage, began to be witty with him. The devil suggested that as he had offended the second or third Person of the Trinity, he had better pray the Father to mediate for him with Christ and the Holy Spirit. Then the devil took another turn. Christ, he said, was



really sorry for Bunyan, but his case was beyond remedy. Bunyan's sin was so peculiar, that it was not of the nature of those for which He had bled and died, and had not, therefore, been laid to His charge. To justify Bunyan he must come down and die again, and that was not to be thought of. 'Oh!' exclaimed the unfortunate victim, 'the unthought-of imaginations, frights, fears, and terrors, that are effected by a thorough application of guilt (to a spirit) that is yielded to desperation. This is the man that hath his dwelling among the tombs.'

Sitting in this humour on a settle in the street at Bedford, he was pondering over his fearful state. The sun in heaven seemed to grudge its light to him. 'The stones in the street and the tiles on the houses did bend themselves against him.' Each crisis in Bunyan's mind is always framed in the picture of some spot where it occurred. He was crying 'in the bitterness of his soul, How can God comfort such a wretch as I am?' As before, in the shop, a voice came in answer, 'This sin is not unto death.' The first voice had brought him hope which was almost extinguished; the second was a message of life. The night was gone, and it was daylight. He had come to the end of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and the spectres and the hobgoblins which had gibbered at him suddenly all vanished. A moment before he had supposed that he was out of reach of pardon, that he had no right to pray, no right to repent, or, at least, that neither prayer nor repentance could profit him. If his sin was not to death, then he was on the same ground as other sinners. If they might pray, he might pray, and might look to be forgiven on the same terms. He still saw that his 'selling Christ' had been 'most barbarous,' but despair was followed by an extravagance, no

less unbounded, of gratitude, when he felt that Christ would pardon even this.

‘Love and affection for Christ,’ he says, ‘did work at this time such a strong and hot desire of revengement upon myself for the abuse I had done to Him, that, to speak as then I thought, had I had a thousand gallons of blood in my veins, I could freely have spilt it all at the command of my Lord and Saviour. The tempter told me it was vain to pray. Yet, thought I, I will pray. But, said the tempter, your sin is unpardonable. Well, said I, I will pray. It is no boot, said he. Yet, said I, I will pray : so I went to prayer, and I uttered words to this effect : Lord, Satan tells me that neither Thy mercy nor Christ’s blood is sufficient to save my soul. Lord, shall I honour Thee most by believing that Thou wilt and canst, or him, by believing that Thou neither wilt nor canst ? Lord, I would fain honour Thee by believing that Thou wilt and canst. As I was there before the Lord, the Scripture came, Oh ! man, great is thy faith, even as if one had clapped me on the back.’

The waves had not wholly subsided ; but we need not follow the undulations any farther. It is enough that after a ‘conviction of sin,’ considerably deeper than most people find necessary for themselves, Bunyan had come to realise what was meant by salvation in Christ, according to the received creed of the contemporary Protestant world. The intensity of his emotions arose only from the completeness with which he believed it. Man had sinned, and by sin was made a servant of the devil. His redemption was a personal act of the Saviour towards each individual sinner. In the Atonement Christ had before him each separate person whom he designed to save, blotting out his offences, however heinous they

might be, and recording in place of them his own perfect obedience. Each reconciled sinner in return regarded Christ's sufferings as undergone immediately for himself, and gratitude for that great deliverance enabled and obliged him to devote his strength and soul thenceforward to God's service. In the seventeenth century, all earnest English Protestants held this belief. In the nineteenth century, most of us repeat the phrases of this belief, and pretend to hold it. We think we hold it. We are growing more cautious, perhaps, with our definitions. We suspect that there may be mysteries in God's nature and methods which we cannot fully explain. The outlines of 'the scheme of salvation' are growing indistinct; and we see it through a gathering mist. Yet the essence of it will remain true whether we recognise it or not. While man remains man he will do things which he ought not to do. He will leave undone things which he ought to do. To will, may be present with him; but how to perform what he wills, he will never fully know, and he will still hate 'the body of death' which he feels clinging to him. He will try to do better. When he falls he will struggle to his feet again. He will climb and climb on the hill side, though he never reaches the top, and knows that he can never reach it. His life will be a failure, which he will not dare to offer as a fit account of himself, or as worth a serious regard. Yet he will still hope that he will not be wholly cast away, when after his sleep in death he wakes again.

Now, says Bunyan, there remained only the hinder part of the tempest. Heavenly voices continued to encourage him. 'As I was passing in the field,' he goes on, 'I heard the sentence, thy righteousness is in heaven; and methought I saw, with the eyes of my soul, Jesus Christ

at God's right hand, there I say, as my righteousness, so that wherever I was, or whatever I was doing, God could not say of me He wants my righteousness, for that was just before Him. Now did my chains fall off my legs indeed. I was loosed from my affliction and irons; my temptations also fled away, so that from that time those dreadful Scriptures of God left off to trouble me. Now went I home rejoicing for the grace and love of God. Christ of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. I now lived very sweetly at peace with God through Christ. Oh! methought, Christ, Christ! There was nothing but Christ before my eyes. I was not now only looking upon this and the other benefits of Christ apart, as of His blood, burial, and resurrection, but considered Him as a whole Christ. All those graces that were now green in me were yet but like those cracked groats and fourpence half-pennies which rich men carry in their purses, while their gold is in their trunks at home. Oh! I saw my gold was in my trunk at home in Christ my Lord and Saviour. The Lord led me into the mystery of union with the Son of God, that I was joined to Him, that I was flesh of His flesh. If He and I were one, His righteousness was mine, His merits mine, His victory mine. Now I could see myself in heaven and earth at once; in heaven by my Christ, though on earth by my body and person. Christ was that common and public person in whom the whole body of His elect are always to be considered and reckoned. We fulfilled the law by Him, died by Him, rose from the dead by Him, got the victory over sin and death, the devil and hell by Him. I had cause to say, Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in His sanctuary.'

## CHAPTER IV.

### CALL TO THE MINISTRY.

THE Pilgrim falls into the hands of Giant Despair because he has himself first strayed into Byepath Meadow. Bunyan found an explanation of his last convulsion in an act of unbelief, of which, on looking back, he perceived that he had been guilty. He had been delivered out of his first temptation. He had not been sufficiently on his guard against temptations that might come in the future. Nay, he had himself tempted God. His wife had been overtaken by a premature confinement, and was suffering acutely. It was at the time when Bunyan was exercised with questions about the truth of religion altogether. As the poor woman lay crying at his side, he had said mentally, 'Lord, if Thou wilt now remove this sad affliction from my wife, and cause that she be troubled no more therewith this night, then I shall know that Thou canst discern the more secret thoughts of the heart.' In a moment the pain ceased and she fell into a sleep which lasted till morning. Bunyan, though surprised at the time, forgot what had happened, till it rushed back upon his memory, when he had committed himself by a similar mental assent to selling Christ. He remembered the proof which had been given to him that God could and did discern his thoughts. God had discerned this second



thought also, and in punishing him for it had punished him at the same time for the doubt which he had allowed himself to feel. 'I should have believed His word,' he said, 'and not have put an "if" upon the all-seeingness of God.'

The suffering was over now, and he felt that it had been infinitely beneficial to him. He understood better the glory of God and of his Son. The Scriptures had opened their secrets to him, and he had seen them to be in very truth the keys of the kingdom of Heaven. Never so clearly as after this 'temptation' had he perceived 'the heights of grace, and love, and mercy.' Two or three times 'he had such strange apprehensions of the grace of God as had amazed him.' The impression was so overpowering that if it had continued long 'it would have rendered him incapable for business.' He joined his friend Mr. Gifford's church. He was baptised in the Ouse, and became a professed member of the Baptist congregation. Soon after, his mental conflict was entirely over, and he had two quiet years of peace. Before a man can use his powers to any purpose, he must arrive at some conviction in which his intellect can acquiesce. 'Calm yourself,' says Jean Paul; 'it is your first necessity. Be a stoic if nothing else will serve.' Bunyan had not been driven into stoicism. He was now restored to the possession of his faculties, and his remarkable ability was not long in showing itself.

The first consequence of his mental troubles was an illness. He had a cough which threatened to turn into consumption. He thought it was all over with him, and he was fixing his eyes 'on the heavenly Jerusalem and the innumerable company of angels;' but the danger passed off, and he became well and strong in mind and body.

Notwithstanding his various miseries, he had not neglected his business, and had indeed been specially successful. By the time that he was twenty-five years old he was in a position considerably superior to that in which he was born. 'God,' says a contemporary biographer, 'had increased his stores so that he lived in great credit among his neighbours.' On May 13, 1653, Bedfordshire sent an address to Cromwell approving the dismissal of the Long Parliament, recognising Oliver himself as the Lord's instrument, and recommending two county magistrates as fit persons to serve in the Assembly which was to take its place. Among thirty-six names attached to this document, appear those of Gifford and Bunyan. This speaks for itself: he must have been at least a householder and a person of consideration. It was not, however, as a prosperous brazier that Bunyan was to make his way. He had a gift of speech, which, in the democratic congregation to which he belonged, could not long remain hid. Young as he was, he had sounded the depths of spiritual experience. Like Dante he had been in hell—the popular hell of English Puritanism—and in 1655 he was called upon to take part in the 'ministry.' He was modest, humble, shrinking. The minister when he preached was, according to the theory, an instrument uttering the words not of himself but of the Holy Spirit. A man like Bunyan, who really believed this, might well be alarmed. After earnest entreaty, however, 'he made experiment of his powers' in private, and it was at once evident that, with the thing which these people meant by inspiration, he was abundantly supplied. No such preacher to the uneducated English masses was to be found within the four seas. He says that he had no desire of vain glory; no one who has studied his character can suppose

that he had. He was a man of natural genius, who believed the Protestant form of Christianity to be completely true. He knew nothing of philosophy, nothing of history, nothing of literature. The doubts to which he acknowledged being without their natural food, had never presented themselves in a form which would have compelled him to submit to remain uncertain. Doubt, as he had felt it, was a direct enemy of morality and purity, and as such he had fought with it and conquered it. Protestant Christianity was true. All mankind were perishing unless they saw it to be true. This was his message; a message—supposing him to have been right—of an importance so immeasurable that all else was nothing. He was still ‘afflicted with the fiery darts of the devil,’ but he saw that he must not bury his abilities. ‘In fear and trembling,’ therefore, he set himself to the work, and ‘did according to his power preach the Gospel that God had shewn him.’

‘The Lord led him to begin where his Word began—with sinners. This part of my work,’ he says, ‘I fulfilled with a great sense, for the terrors of the law and guilt for my transgressions lay heavy on my conscience. I preached what I felt. I had been sent to my hearers as from the dead. I went myself in chains to preach to them in chains, and carried that fire in my own conscience that I persuaded them to beware of. I have gone full of guilt and terror to the pulpit door; God carried me on with a strong hand, for neither guilt nor hell could take me off.’

Many of Bunyan’s addresses remain in the form of theological treatises, and that I may not have to return to the subject, I shall give some account of them. His doctrine was the doctrine of the best and strongest minds in Europe. It had been believed by Luther, it had been

believed by Knox. It was believed at that moment by Oliver Cromwell as completely as by Bunyan himself. It was believed, so far as such a person could be said to believe anything, by the all-accomplished Leibnitz himself. Few educated people use the language of it now. In them it was a fire from heaven shining like a sun in a dark world. With us the fire has gone out; in the place of it we have but smoke and ashes, and the Evangelical mind in search of 'something deeper and truer than satisfied the last century,' is turning back to Catholic verities. What Bunyan had to say may be less than the whole truth: we shall scarcely find the still missing part of it in lines of thought which we have outgrown.

Bunyan preached wherever opportunity served—in woods, in barns, on village greens, or in town chapels. The substance of his sermons he revised and published. He began, as he said, with sinners, explaining the condition of men in the world. They were under the law, or they were under grace. Every person that came into the world was born under the law, and as such was bound, under pain of eternal damnation, to fulfil completely and continually every one of the Ten Commandments. The Bible said plainly, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.' 'The soul that sinneth it shall die.' The Ten Commandments extended into many more, and to fail in a single one was as fatal as to break them all. A man might go on for a long time, for sixty years perhaps, without falling. Bunyan does not mean that anyone really could do all this, but he assumes the possibility; yet he says if the man slipped once before he died, he would eternally perish. The law did not refer to words and actions only, but to thoughts and feelings. It fol-



lowed a man in his prayers, and detected a wandering thought. It allowed no repentance to those who lived and died under it. If it was asked whether God could not pardon, as earthly judges pardon criminals, the answer was, that it is not the law which is merciful to the earthly offender but the magistrate. The law is an eternal principle. The magistrate may forgive a man without exacting satisfaction. The law knows no forgiveness. It can be as little changed as an axiom of mathematics. Repentance cannot undo the past. Let a man leave his sins and live as purely as an angel all the rest of his life, his old faults remain in the account against him, and his state is as bad as ever it was. God's justice once offended knows not pity or compassion, but runs on the offender like a lion and throws him into prison, there to lie to all eternity unless infinite satisfaction be given to it. And that satisfaction no son of Adam could possibly make.

This conception of Divine justice, not as a sentence of a judge, but as the action of an eternal law, is identical with Spinoza's. That every act involves consequences which cannot be separated from it, and may continue operative to eternity, is a philosophical position which is now generally admitted. Combined with the traditionary notions of a future judgment and punishment in hell, the recognition that there was a law in the case and that the law could not be broken, led to the frightful inference that each individual was liable to be kept alive and tortured through all eternity. And this, in fact, was the fate really in store for every human creature unless some extraordinary remedy could be found. Bunyan would allow no merit to anyone. He would not have it supposed that only the profane or grossly wicked were in danger from



the law. 'A man,' he says, 'may be turned from a vain, loose, open, profane conversation and sinning against the law, to a holy, righteous, religious life, and yet be under the same state and as sure to be damned as the others that are more profane and loose.' The natural man might think it strange, but the language of the curse was not to be mistaken. Cursed is every one who has failed to fulfil the whole law. There was not a person in the whole world who had not himself sinned in early life. All had sinned in Adam also, and St. Paul had said in consequence, 'There is none that doeth good, no, not one! The law was given not that we might be saved by obeying it, but that we might know the holiness of God and our own vileness, and that we might understand that we should not be damned for nothing. God would have no quarrelling at His just condemning of us at that day.'

This is Bunyan's notion of the position in which we all naturally stand in this world, and from which the substitution of Christ's perfect fulfilment of the law alone rescues us. It is calculated, no doubt, to impress on us a profound horror of moral evil when the penalty attached to it is so fearful. But it is dangerous to introduce into religion metaphysical conceptions of 'law.' The cord cracks that is strained too tightly; and it is only for brief periods of high spiritual tension that a theology so merciless can sustain itself. No one with a conscience in him will think of claiming any merit for himself. But we know also that there are degrees of demerit, and, theory or no theory, we fall back on the first verse of the English Liturgy, as containing a more endurable account of things.

For this reason, among others, Bunyan disliked the Liturgy. He thought the doctrine of it false, and he

objected to a Liturgy on principle. He has a sermon on Prayer, in which he insists that to be worth anything prayer must be the expression of an inward feeling ; and that people cannot feel in lines laid down for them. Forms of prayer he thought especially mischievous to children, as accustoming them to use words to which they attached no meaning.

‘ My judgment,’ he says, ‘ is that men go the wrong way to learn their children to pray. It seems to me a better way for people to tell their children betimes what cursed creatures they are, how they are under the wrath of God by reason of original and actual sin ; also to tell them the nature of God’s wrath and the duration of misery, which if they would conscientiously do, they would sooner learn their children to pray than they do. The way that men learn to pray is by conviction of sin, and this is the way to make our “sweet babes” do so too.’

‘ Sweet babes ’ is unworthy of Bunyan. There is little sweetness in a state of things so stern as he conceives. He might have considered, too, that there was a danger of making children unreal in another and worse sense by teaching them doctrines which neither child nor man can comprehend. It may be true that a single sin may consign me to everlasting hell, but I cannot be made to acknowledge the justice of it. ‘ Wrath of God ’ and such expressions are out of place when we are brought into the presence of metaphysical laws. Wrath corresponds to free-will misused. It is senseless and extravagant when pronounced against actions which men cannot help, when the faulty action is the necessary consequence of their nature, and the penalty the necessary consequence of the action.

The same confusion of thought lies in the treatment of the kindred subjects of Free-will, Election, and Reprobation. The logic must be maintained, and God's moral attributes simultaneously vindicated. Bunyan argues about it as ingeniously as Leibnitz himself. Those who suppose that specific guilt attaches to particular acts, that all men are put into the world, free to keep the Commandments or to break them, that they are equally able to do one as to do the other, and are, therefore, proper objects of punishment, hold an opinion which is consistent in itself, but is in entire contradiction with facts. Children are not as able to control their inclinations as grown men, and one man is not as able to control himself as another. Some have no difficulty from the first, and are constitutionally good ; some are constitutionally weak, or have incurable propensities for evil. Some are brought up with care and insight ; others seem never to have any chance at all. So evident is this, that impartial thinkers have questioned the reality of human guilt in the sense in which it is generally understood. Even Butler allows that if we look too curiously we may have a difficulty in finding where it lies. And here, if anywhere, there is a real natural truth in the doctrine of Election, independent of the merit of those who are so happy as to find favour. Bunyan, however, reverses the inference. He will have all guilty together, those who do well and those who do ill. Even the elect are in themselves as badly off as the reprobate, and are equally included under sin. Those who are saved are saved for Christ's merits and not for their own.

Men of calmer temperament accept facts as they find them. They are too conscious of their ignorance to insist on explaining problems which are beyond their

reach. Bunyan lived in an age of intense religious excitement, when the strongest minds were exercising themselves on those questions. It is noticeable that the most effective intellects inclined to necessitarian conclusions : some in the shape of Calvinism, some in the corresponding philosophic form of Spinozism. From both alike there came an absolute submission to the decrees of God, and a passionate devotion to his service ; while the morality of Free-will is cold and calculating ; appeals to a sense of duty do not reach beyond the understanding ; the enthusiasm which will stir men's hearts and give them a real power of resisting temptation must be nourished on more invigorating food.

But I need dwell no more on a subject which is unsuited for these pages.

The object of Bunyan, like that of Luther, like that of all great spiritual teachers, was to bring his wandering fellow-mortals into obedience to the commandments, even while he insisted on the worthlessness of it. He sounded the strings to others which had sounded loudest in himself. When he passed from mysticism into matters of ordinary life, he showed the same practical good sense which distinguishes the chief of all this order of thinkers—St. Paul. There is a sermon of Bunyan's on Christian behaviour, on the duties of parents to children, and masters to servants, which might be studied with as much advantage in English households as the 'Pilgrim's Progress' itself. To fathers he says, 'Take heed that the misdeeds for which thou correctest thy children be not learned them by thee. Many children learn that wickedness of their parents, for which they beat and chastise them. Take heed that thou smile not upon them to encourage them in small faults, lest that thy carriage to them be an en-



couragement to them to commit greater faults. Take heed that thou use not unsavoury and unseemly words in thy chastising of them, as railing, miscalling, and the like—this is devilish. Take heed that thou do not use them to many chiding words and threatenings, mixed with lightness and laughter. This will harden.'

And again: 'I tell you that if parents carry it lovingly towards their children, mixing their mercies with loving rebukes, and their loving rebukes with fatherly and motherly compassions, they are more likely to save their children than by being churlish and severe to them. Even if these things do not save them, if their mercy do them no good, yet it will greatly ease them at the day of death to consider, I have done by love as much as I could to save and deliver my child from hell.'

Whole volumes on education have said less, or less to the purpose, than these simple words. Unfortunately, parents do not read Bunyan. He is left to children.

Similarly, he says to masters:—

'It is thy duty so to behave thyself to thy servant that thy service may not only be for thy good, but for the good of thy servant, and that in body and soul. Deal with him as to admonition as with thy children. Take heed thou do not turn thy servants into slaves by overcharging them in thy work with thy greediness. Take heed thou carry not thyself to thy servant as he of whom it is said, "He is such a man of Belial that his servants cannot speak to him." The Apostle bids you forbear to threaten them, because you also have a Master in Heaven. Masters, give your servants that which is just, just labour and just wages. Servants that are truly godly care not how cheap they serve their masters, provided they may get into godly families, or where they may be



convenient for the Word. But if a master or mistress takes this opportunity to make a prey of their servants, it is abominable. I have heard poor servants say that in some carnal families they have had more liberty to God's things and more fairness of dealing than among many professors. Such masters make religion to stink before the inhabitants of the land.'

Bunyan was generally charitable in his judgment upon others. If there was any exception, it was of Professors who discredited their calling by conceit and worldliness.

'No sin,' he says, 'reigneth more in the world than pride among Professors. The thing is too apparent for any man to deny. We may and do see pride display itself in the apparel and carriage of Professors almost as much as among any in the land. I have seen church members so decked and bedaubed with their fangles and toys that when they have been at worship I have wondered with what faces such painted persons could sit in the place where they were without swooning. I once talked with a maid, by way of reproof for her fond and gaudy garment; she told me the tailor would make it so. Poor proud girl, she gave orders to the tailor to make it so.'

I will give one more extract from Bunyan's pastoral addresses. It belongs to a later period in his ministry, when the law had, for a time, remade Dissent into a crime; but it will throw light on the part of his story which we are now approaching, and it is in every way very characteristic of him. He is speaking to sufferers under persecution. He says to them :—

'Take heed of being offended with magistrates, because by their statutes they may cross thy inclinations. It is given to them to bear the sword, and a command is to

thee, if thy heart cannot acquiesce with all things, with meekness and patience to suffer. Discontent in the mind sometimes puts discontent into the mouth ; and discontent in the mouth doth sometimes also put a halter about thy neck. For as a man speaking a word in jest may for that be hanged in earnest, so he that speaks in discontent may die for it in sober sadness. Above all, get thy conscience possessed more and more with this, that the magistrate is God's ordinance, and is ordered of God as such ; that he is the minister of God to thee for good, and that it is thy duty to fear him and to pray for him ; to give thanks to God for him and be subject to him ; as both Paul and Peter admonish us ; and that not only for wrath, but for conscience sake. For all other arguments come short of binding the soul when this argument is wanting, until we believe that of God we are bound thereto.

‘I speak not these things as knowing any that are disaffected to the government, for I love to be alone, if not with godly men, in things that are convenient. I speak to show my loyalty to the king, and my love to my fellow-subjects, and my desire that all Christians shall walk in ways of peace and truth.’

## CHAPTER V.

### ARREST AND TRIAL.

BUNYAN'S preaching enterprise became an extraordinary success. All the Midland Counties heard of his fame, and demanded to hear him. He had been Deacon under Gifford at the Bedford Church; but he was in such request as a preacher, that, in 1657, he was released from his duties there as unable to attend to them. Sects were springing up all over England as weeds in a hotbed. He was soon in controversy; Controversy with Church of England people; Controversy with the Ranters, who believed Christ to be a myth; Controversy with certain Quakers who seem to have disbelieved in his Divinity and in the inspiration of the Scriptures. Envy at his rapidly acquired reputation brought him baser enemies. He was called a witch, a Jesuit, a highwayman. It was reported that he had 'his misses,' that he had two wives, &c. 'My foes have missed their mark in this,' he said with honest warmth: 'I am not the man. If all the fornicators and adulterers in England were hanged by the neck, John Bunyan, the object of their envy, would be still alive and well. I know not whether there be such a thing as a woman breathing under the cope of the whole heavens but by their apparel, their children, or common fame, except my wife.'

But a more serious trial was now before him. Cromwell passed away. The Protectorate came to an end. England decided that it had had enough of Puritans and republicans, and would give the Stuarts and the Established Church another trial. A necessary consequence was the revival of the Act of Uniformity. The Independents were not meek like the Baptists, using no weapons to oppose what they disapproved but passive resistance. The same motives which had determined the original constitution of a Church combining the characters of Protestant and Catholic, instead of leaving religion free, were even more powerful at the Restoration than they had been at the accession of Elizabeth. Before toleration is possible, men must have learnt to tolerate toleration itself; and in times of violent convictions, toleration is looked on as indifference, and indifference as Atheism in disguise. Catholics and Protestants, Churchmen and Dissenters, regarded one another as enemies of God and the State, with whom no peace was possible. Toleration had been tried by the Valois princes in France. Church and chapel had been the rendezvous of armed fanatics. The preachers blew the war-trumpet, and every town and village had been the scene of furious conflicts, which culminated in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. The same result would have followed in England if the same experiment had been ventured. The different communities were forbidden to have their separate places of worship, and services were contrived which moderate men of all sorts could use and interpret after their own convictions. The instrument required to be delicately handled. It succeeded tolerably as long as Elizabeth lived. When Elizabeth died, the balance was no longer fairly kept. The High Church party obtained the ascendancy and abused

their power. Tyranny brought revolution, and the Catholic element in turn disappeared. The Bishops were displaced by Presbyterian elders. The Presbyterian elders became themselves 'hireling wolves,' 'old priest' written in new characters. Cromwell had left conscience free to Protestants. But even he had refused equal liberty to Catholics and Episcopalians. He was gone too, and Church and King were back again. How were they to stand? The stern resolute men, to whom the Commonwealth had been the establishment of God's kingdom upon earth, were as little inclined to keep terms with Antichrist as the Church people had been inclined to keep terms with Cromwell. To have allowed them to meet openly in their conventicles would have been to make over the whole of England to them as a seed-bed in which to plant sedition. It was pardonable, it was even necessary, for Charles II. and his advisers to fall back upon Elizabeth's principles, at least as long as the ashes were still glowing. Indulgence had to be postponed till cooler times. With the Fifth Monarchy men abroad, every chapel, except those of the Baptists, would have been a magazine of explosives.

Under the 35th of Elizabeth, Nonconformists refusing to attend worship in the parish churches were to be imprisoned till they made their submission. Three months were allowed them to consider. If at the end of that time they were still obstinate, they were to be banished the realm; and if they subsequently returned to England without permission from the Crown, they were liable to execution as felons. This Act had fallen with the Long Parliament, but at the Restoration it was held to have revived and to be still in force. The parish churches were cleared of their unordained ministers. The Dis-



senters' chapels were closed. The people were required by proclamation to be present on Sundays in their proper place. So the majority of the nation had decided. If they had wished for religious liberty they would not have restored the Stuarts, or they would have insisted on conditions, and would have seen that they were observed.

Venner's plot showed the reality of the danger and justified the precaution.

The Baptists and Quakers might have been trusted to discourage violence, but it was impossible to distinguish among the various sects, whose tenets were unknown and even unsettled. The great body of Cromwell's spiritual supporters believed that armed resistance to a government which they disapproved was not only lawful, but was enjoined.

Thus, no sooner was Charles II. on the throne than the Nonconformists found themselves again under bondage. Their separate meetings were prohibited, and they were not only forbidden to worship in their own fashion, but they had to attend church, under penalties. The Bedford Baptists refused to obey. Their meeting-house in the town was shut up, but they continued to assemble in woods and outhouses; Bunyan preaching to them as before, and going to the place in disguise. Informers were soon upon his track. The magistrates had received orders to be vigilant. Bunyan was the most prominent Dissenter in the neighbourhood. He was too sensible to court martyrdom. He had intended to leave the town till more quiet times, and had arranged to meet a few of his people once more to give them a parting address. It was November 12, 1660. The place agreed on was a house in the village of Samsell near Harlington. Notice of his intention was privately conveyed to

Mr. Wingate, a magistrate in the adjoining district. The constables were set to watch the house, and were directed to bring Bunyan before him. Some member of the congregation heard of it. Bunyan was warned, and was advised to stay at home that night, or else to conceal himself. His departure had been already arranged; but when he learnt that a warrant was actually out against him, he thought that he was bound to stay and face the danger. He was the first Nonconformist who had been marked for arrest. If he flinched after he had been singled out by name, the whole body of his congregation would be discouraged. Go to church he would not, or promise to go to church; but he was willing to suffer whatever punishment the law might order. Thus at the time and place which had been agreed on, he was in the room, at Samsell, with his Bible in his hand, and was about to begin his address, when the constables entered and arrested him. He made no resistance. He desired only to be allowed to say a few words, which the constables permitted. He then prepared to go with them. He was not treated with any roughness. It was too late to take him that night before the magistrate. His friends undertook for his appearance when he should be required, and he went home with them. The constables came for him again on the following afternoon.

Mr. Wingate, when the information was first brought to him, supposed that he had fallen on a nest of Fifth Monarchy men. He enquired, when Bunyan was brought in, how many arms had been found at the meeting. When he learnt that there were no arms, and that it had no political character whatever, he evidently thought it was a matter of no consequence. He told Bunyan that he had been breaking the law, and asked him why he could

not attend to his business. Bunyan said that his object in teaching was merely to persuade people to give up their sins. He could do that and attend to his business also. Wingate answered that the law must be obeyed. He must commit Bunyan for trial at the Quarter Sessions ; but he would take bail for him, if his securities would engage that he would not preach again meanwhile. Bunyan refused to be bailed on any such terms. Preach he would and must, and the recognizances would be forfeited. After such an answer, Wingate could only send him to gaol : he could not help himself. The committal was made out, and Bunyan was being taken away, when two of his friends met him, who were acquainted with Wingate, and they begged the constable to wait. They went in to the magistrate. They told him who and what Bunyan was. The magistrate had not the least desire to be hard, and it was agreed that if he would himself give some general promise of a vague kind he might be let go altogether. Bunyan was called back. Another magistrate who knew him had by this time joined Wingate. They both said that they were reluctant to send him to prison. If he would promise them that he would not call the people together any more, he might go home.

They had purposely chosen a form of words which would mean as little as possible. But Bunyan would not accept an evasion. He said that he would not force the people to come together, but if he was in a place where the people were met, he should certainly speak to them. The magistrate repeated that the meetings were unlawful. They would be satisfied if Bunyan would simply promise that he would not call such meetings. It was as plain as possible that they wished to dismiss the case, and they were thrusting words into his mouth which he could use

without a mental reservation ; but he persisted that there were many ways in which a meeting might be called ; if people came together to hear him, knowing that he would speak, he might be said to have called them together.

Remonstrances and entreaties were equally useless, and, with extreme unwillingness, they committed him to Bedford Gaol to wait for the sessions.

It is not for us to say that Bunyan was too precise. He was himself the best judge of what his conscience and his situation required. To himself, at any rate, his trial was at the moment most severe. He had been left a widower a year or two before, with four young children, one of them blind. He had lately married a second time. His wife was pregnant. The agitation at her husband's arrest brought on premature labour, and she was lying in his house in great danger. He was an affectionate man, and the separation at such a time was peculiarly distressing. After some weeks the quarter sessions came on. Bunyan was indicted under the usual form, that he ' being a person of such and such condition had since such a time devilishly and perniciously abstained from coming to church to hear Divine service, and was a common upholder of unlawful meetings and conventicles, to the great disturbance and distraction of the good subjects of this kingdom, contrary to the laws of our Sovereign Lord the King.'

There seems to have been a wish to avoid giving him a formal trial. He was not required to plead, and it may have been thought that he had been punished sufficiently. He was asked why he did not go to church ? He said that the Prayer-book was made by man ; he was ordered in the Bible to pray with the spirit and the understanding, not with the spirit and the Prayer-book. The magistrates,



referring to another Act of Parliament, cautioned Bunyan against finding fault with the Prayer-book, or he would bring himself into further trouble. Justice Keelin who presided said (so Bunyan declares, and it has been the standing jest of his biographers ever since) that the Prayer-book had been in use ever since the Apostles' time. Perhaps the words were that parts of it had been then in use (the Apostles' Creed, for instance), and thus they would have been strictly true. However this might be, they told him kindly, as Mr. Wingate had done, that it would be better for him if he would keep to his proper work. The law had prohibited conventicles. He might teach, if he pleased, in his own family and among his friends. He must not call large numbers of people together. He was as impracticable as before, and the magistrates, being but unregenerate mortals, may be pardoned if they found him provoking. If, he said, it was lawful for him to do good to a few, it must be equally lawful to do good to many. He had a gift, which he was bound to use. If it was sinful for men to meet together to exhort one another to follow Christ, he should sin still.

He was compelling the Court to punish him, whether they wished it or not. He describes the scene as if the choice had rested with the magistrates to convict him or to let him go. If he was bound to do his duty, they were equally bound to do theirs. They took his answers as a plea of guilty to the indictment, and Justice Keelin, who was chairman, pronounced his sentence in the terms of the Act. He was to go to prison for three months; if, at the end of three months, he still refused to conform, he was to be transported; and if he came back without license he would be hanged. Bunyan merely answered, 'If I



were out of prison to-day, I would preach the Gospel again to-morrow.' More might have followed, but the gaoler led him away.

There were three gaols in Bedford, and no evidence has been found to show in which of the three Bunyan was confined. Two of them, the county gaol and the town gaol, were large roomy buildings. Tradition has chosen the third, a small lock-up, fourteen feet square, which stood over the river between the central arches of the old bridge; and as it appears from the story that he had at times fifty or sixty fellow-prisoners, and as he admits himself that he was treated at first with exceptional kindness, it may be inferred that tradition, in selecting the prison on the bridge, was merely desiring to exhibit the sufferings of the Nonconformist martyr in a sensational form, and that he was never in this prison at all. When it was pulled down in 1811 a gold ring was found in the rubbish, with the initials 'J. B.' upon it. This is one of the 'trifles light as air' which carry conviction to the 'jealous' only, and is too slight a foundation on which to assert a fact so inherently improbable.

When the three months were over, the course of law would have brought him again to the bar, when he would have had to choose between conformity and exile. There was still the same desire to avoid extremities, and as the day approached, the clerk of the peace was sent to persuade him into some kind of compliance. Various insurrections had broken out since his arrest, and must have shown him, if he could have reflected, that there was real reason for the temporary enforcement of the Act. He was not asked to give up preaching. He was asked only to give up public preaching. It was well known that he had no disposition to rebellion. Even the

going to church was not insisted on. The clerk of the peace told him that he might 'exhort his neighbours in private discourse,' if only he would not bring the people together in numbers, which the magistrates would be bound to notice. In this way he might continue his usefulness, and would not be interfered with.

Bunyan knew his own freedom from seditious intentions. He would not see that the magistrates could not suspend the law and make an exception in his favour. They were going already to the utmost limit of indulgence. But the more he disapproved of rebellion, the more punctilious he was in carrying out resistance of another kind which he held to be legitimate. He was a representative person, and he thought that in yielding he would hurt the cause of religious liberty. 'The law,' he said, 'had provided two ways of obeying—one to obey actively, and if he could not in conscience obey actively, then to suffer whatever penalty was inflicted on him.'

The clerk of the peace could produce no effect. Bunyan rather looked on him as a false friend trying to entangle him. The three months elapsed, and the magistrates had to determine what was to be done. If Bunyan was brought before them, they must exile him. His case was passed over and he was left in prison, where his wife and children were allowed to visit him daily. He did not understand the law or appreciate their forbearance. He exaggerated his danger. At the worst he could only have been sent to America, where he might have remained as long as he pleased. He feared that he might perhaps be hanged.

'I saw what was coming,' he said, 'and had two considerations especially on my heart, how to be able to endure, should my imprisonment be long and tedious, and

how to be able to encounter death should that be my portion. I was made to see that if I would suffer rightly, I must pass sentence of death upon everything that can properly be called a thing of this life, even to reckon myself, my wife, my children, my health, my enjoyments all as dead to me, and myself as dead to them. Yet I was a man compassed with infirmities. The parting with my wife and poor children hath often been to me in this place (the prison in which he was writing) as the pulling of my flesh from my bones ; and that not only because I am too, too, fond of those great mercies, but also because I should have often brought to my mind the hardships, miseries, and wants my poor family was like to meet with should I be taken from them, especially my poor blind child, who lay nearer my heart than all I had besides. Poor child, thought I, what sorrow art thou like to have for thy portion in this world ! Thou must be beaten, suffer hunger, cold, nakedness, and a thousand calamities, though I cannot now endure the wind should blow on thee. But yet, thought I, I must venture all with God, though it goeth to the quick to leave you. I was as a man who was pulling down his house upon the head of his wife and children. Yet thought I, I must do it—I must do it. I had this for consideration, that if I should now venture all for God, I engaged God to take care of my concerns. Also I had dread of the torments of hell, which I was sure they must partake of that for fear of the cross do shrink from their profession. I had this much upon my spirit, that my imprisonment might end in the gallows for aught I could tell. In the condition I now was in I was not fit to die, nor indeed did I think I could if I should be called to it. I feared I might show a weak heart, and give occasion to the enemy. This lay with

great trouble on me, for methought I was ashamed to die with a pale face and tottering knees for such a cause as this. The things of God were kept out of my sight. The tempter followed me with, "But whither must you go when you die? What will become of you? What evidence have you for heaven and glory, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified?" Thus was I tossed many weeks; but I felt it was for the Word and way of God that I was in this condition. God might give me comfort or not as He pleased. I was bound, but He was free—yea, it was my duty to stand to His Word, whether He would ever look upon me or no, or save me at the last. Wherefore, thought I, the point being thus, I am for going on and venturing my eternal state with Christ, whether I have comfort here or no. If God does not come in, thought I, I will leap off the ladder even blindfold into eternity, sink or swim, come heaven, come hell. Now was my heart full of comfort.'

The ladder was an imaginary ladder, but the resolution was a genuine manly one, such as lies at the bottom of all brave and honourable action. Others who have thought very differently from Bunyan about such matters have felt the same as he felt. Be true to yourself whatever comes, even if damnation come. Better hell with an honest heart, than heaven with cowardice and insincerity. It was the more creditable to Bunyan, too, because the spectres and hobgoblins had begun occasionally to revisit him.

'Of all temptations I ever met with in my life,' he says, 'to question the being of God and the truth of His Gospel is the worst and worst to be borne. When this temptation comes it takes my girdle from me and removes the foundation from under me. Though God has visited

my soul with never so blessed a discovery of Himself, yet afterwards I have been in my spirit so filled with darkness, that I could not so much as once conceive what that God and that comfort was with which I had been refreshed.



## CHAPTER VI.

### THE BEDFORD GAOL.

THE irregularities in the proceedings against Bunyan had perhaps been suggested by the anticipation of the general pardon which was expected in the following spring. At the coronation of Charles, April 23, 1661, an order was issued for the release of prisoners who were in gaol for any offences short of felony. Those who were waiting their trials were to be let go at once. Those convicted and under sentence might sue out a pardon under the Great Seal at any time within a year from the proclamation. Was Bunyan legally convicted or not? He had not pleaded directly to the indictment. No evidence had been heard against him. His trial had been a conversation between himself and the Court. The point had been raised by his friends. His wife had been in London to make interest for him, and a peer had presented a petition in Bunyan's behalf in the House of Lords. The judges had been directed to look again into the matter at the midsummer assizes. The high sheriff was active in Bunyan's favour. The Judges Twisden, Chester, and no less a person than Sir Matthew Hale, appear to have concluded that his conviction was legal, that he could not be tried again, and that he must apply for pardon in the regular way. His wife, however, at the instance of the

sheriff, obtained a hearing, and they listened courteously to what she had to say. When she had done, Mr. Justice Twisden put the natural question, whether, if her husband was released, he would refrain from preaching in public for the future. If he intended to repeat his offence immediately that he was at liberty, his liberty would only bring him into a worse position. The wife at once said that he dared not leave off preaching as long as he could speak. The judge asked if she thought her husband was to be allowed to do as he pleased. She said that he was a peaceable person, and wished only to be restored to a position in which he could maintain his family. They had four small children who could not help themselves, one of them being blind, and they had nothing to live upon as long as her husband was in prison but the charity of their friends. Hale remarked that she looked very young to have four children. 'I am but mother-in-law to them,' she said, 'having not been married yet full two years. I was with child when my husband was first apprehended, but being young, I being dismayed at the news fell in labour, and so continued for eight days. I was delivered, but my child died.'

Hale was markedly kind. He told her that as the conviction had been recorded they could not set it aside. She might sue out a pardon if she pleased, or she might obtain 'a writ of error,' which would be simpler and less expensive.

She left the court in tears—tears, however, which were not altogether tears of suffering innocence. 'It was not so much,' she said, 'because they were so hardhearted against me and my husband, but to think what a sad account such poor creatures would have to give at the coming of the Lord.' No doubt both Bunyan and she

thought themselves cruelly injured, and they confounded the law with the administration of it. Persons better informed than they often choose to forget that judges are sworn to administer the law which they find, and rail at them as if the sentences which they are obliged by their oaths to pass were their own personal acts.

A pardon, it cannot be too often said, would have been of no use to Bunyan, because he was determined to persevere in disobeying a law which he considered to be unjust. The most real kindness which could be shown to him was to leave him where he was. His imprisonment was intended to be little more than nominal. His gaoler, not certainly without the sanction of the sheriff, let him go where he pleased; once even so far as London. He used his liberty as he had declared that he would. 'I followed my wonted course of preaching,' he says, 'taking all occasions that were put in my hand to visit the people of God.' This was deliberate defiance. The authorities saw that he must be either punished in earnest or the law would fall into contempt. He admitted that he expected to be 'roundly dealt with.' His indulgences were withdrawn, and he was put into close confinement.

Sessions now followed sessions, and assizes, assizes. His detention was doubtless irregular, for by law he should have been sent beyond the seas. He petitioned to be brought to trial again, and complained loudly that his petition was not listened to; but no legislator, in framing an Act of Parliament, ever contemplated an offender in so singular a position. Bunyan was simply trying his strength against the Crown and Parliament. The judges and magistrates respected his character, and were unwilling to drive him out of the country; he had himself no wish for liberty on that condition. The only

resource, therefore, was to prevent him forcibly from repeating an offence that would compel them to adopt harsh measures which they were so earnestly trying to avoid.

Such was the world-famous imprisonment of John Bunyan, which has been the subject of so much eloquent declamation. It lasted in all for more than twelve years. It might have ended at any time if he would have promised to confine his addresses to a private circle. It did end after six years. He was released under the first declaration of indulgence ; but as he instantly recommenced his preaching, he was arrested again. Another six years went by ; he was again let go, and was taken once more immediately after, preaching in a wood. This time he was detained but a few months, and in form more than reality. The policy of the government was then changed, and he was free for the rest of his life.

His condition during his long confinement has furnished a subject for pictures which if correct would be extremely affecting. It is true that, being unable to attend to his usual business, he spent his unoccupied hours in making tags for bootlaces. With this one fact to build on, and with the assumption that the scene of his sufferings was the Bridge Lockhouse, Nonconformist imagination has drawn a 'den' for us, 'where there was not a yard or a court to walk in for daily exercise ;' 'a damp and dreary cell ;' 'a narrow chink which admits a few scanty rays of light to render visible the abode of woe ;' 'the prisoner, pale and emaciated, seated on the humid earth, pursuing his daily task, to earn the morsel which prolongs his existence and his confinement together. Near him, reclining in pensive sadness, his blind daughter, five other distressed children, and an affectionate wife,

whom pinching want and grief have worn down to the gate of death. Ten summer suns have rolled over the mansion of his misery whose reviving rays have never once penetrated his sad abode,' &c. &c.

If this description resembles or approaches the truth, I can but say that to have thus abandoned to want their most distinguished pastor and his family was intensely discreditable to the Baptist community. English prisons in the seventeenth century were not models of good management. But prisoners, whose friends could pay for them, were not consigned to damp and dreary cells; and in default of evidence of which not a particle exists, I cannot charge so reputable a community with a neglect so scandalous. The entire story is in itself incredible. Bunyan was prosperous in his business. He was respected and looked up to by a large and growing body of citizens, including persons of wealth and position in London. He was a representative sufferer fighting the battle of all the Nonconformists in England. He had active supporters in the town of Bedford and among the gentlemen of the county. The authorities, so far as can be inferred from their actions, tried from the first to deal as gently with him as he would allow them to do. Is it conceivable that the Baptists would have left his family to starve; or that his own confinement would have been made so absurdly and needlessly cruel? Is it not far more likely that he found all the indulgences which money could buy and the rules of the prison would allow? Bunyan is not himself responsible for these wild legends. Their real character appears more clearly when we observe how he was occupied during these years.

Friends, in the first place, had free access to him, and strangers who were drawn to him by reputation; while



the gaol was considered a private place, and he was allowed to preach there, at least occasionally, to his fellow-prisoners. Charles Doe, a distinguished Nonconformist, visited him in his confinement, and has left an account of what he saw. 'When I was there,' he writes, 'there were about sixty dissenters besides himself, taken but a little before at a religious meeting at Kaistor, in the county of Bedford, besides two eminent dissenting ministers, Mr. Wheeler and Mr. Dun, by which means the prison was much crowded. Yet, in the midst of all that hurry, I heard Mr. Bunyan both preach and pray with that mighty spirit of faith and plerophory of Divine assistance, that he made me stand and wonder. Here they could sing without fear of being overheard, no informers prowling round, and the world shut out.'

This was not all. A fresh and more severe Conventicle Act was passed in 1670. Attempts were made to levy fines in the town of Bedford. There was a riot there. The local officers refused to assist in quelling it. The shops were shut. Bedford was occupied by soldiers. Yet, at this very time, Bunyan was again allowed to go abroad through general connivance. He spent his nights with his family. He even preached now and then in the woods. Once when he had intended to be out for the night, information was given to a clerical magistrate in the neighbourhood, who disliked him, and a constable was sent to ascertain if the prisoners were all within ward. Bunyan had received a hint of what was coming. He was in his place when the constable came; and the governor of the gaol is reported to have said to him, 'You may go out when you please, for you know better when to return than I can tell you.' Parliament might pass laws, but the execution of them depended on the local

authorities. Before the Declaration of Indulgence, the Baptist church in Bedford was reopened. Bunyan, while still nominally in confinement, attended its meetings. In 1671 he became an Elder; in December of that year he was chosen Pastor. The question was raised whether, as a prisoner, he was eligible. The objection would not have been set aside had he been unable to undertake the duties of the office. These facts prove conclusively that, for a part at least of the twelve years, the imprisonment was little more than formal. He could not have been in the Bridge Gaol when he had sixty fellow-prisoners, and was able to preach to them in private. It is unlikely that at any time he was made to suffer any greater hardships than were absolutely inevitable.

But whether Bunyan's confinement was severe or easy, it was otherwise of inestimable value to him. It gave him leisure to read and reflect. Though he preached often, yet there must have been intervals, perhaps long intervals, of compulsory silence. The excitement of perpetual speech-making is fatal to the exercise of the higher qualities. The periods of calm enabled him to discover powers in himself of which he might otherwise have never known the existence. Of books he had but few; for a time only the Bible and Foxe's 'Martyrs.' But the Bible thoroughly known is a literature of itself—the rarest and the richest in all departments of thought or imagination which exists. Foxe's 'Martyrs,' if he had a complete edition of it, would have given him a very adequate knowledge of history. With those two books he had no cause to complain of intellectual destitution. He must have read more, however. He knew George Herbert—perhaps Spenser—perhaps 'Paradise Lost.' But of books, except of the Bible, he was at no time a

great student. Happily for himself, he had no other book of Divinity, and he needed none. His real study was human life as he had seen it, and the human heart as he had experienced the workings of it. Though he never mastered successfully the art of verse, he had other gifts which belong to a true poet. He had imagination, if not of the highest, yet of a very high order. He had infinite inventive humour, tenderness, and, better than all, powerful masculine sense. To obtain the use of these faculties he needed only composure, and this his imprisonment secured for him. He had published several theological compositions before his arrest, which have relatively little value. Those which he wrote in prison—even on theological subjects—would alone have made him a reputation as a Nonconformist divine. In no other writings are the peculiar views of Evangelical Calvinism brought out more clearly, or with a more heart-felt conviction of their truth. They have furnished an arsenal from which English Protestant divines have ever since equipped themselves. The most beautiful of them, ‘Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners,’ is his own spiritual biography, which contains the account of his early history. The first part of the ‘Pilgrim’s Progress’ was composed there as an amusement. To this, and to his other works which belong to literature, I shall return in a future chapter.

Visitors who saw him in the gaol found his manner and presence as impressive as his writings. ‘He was mild and affable in conversation,’ says one of them, ‘not given to loquacity or to much discourse, unless some urgent occasion required. It was observed he never spoke of himself or of his talents, but seemed low in his own eyes. He was never heard to reproach or revile any,

whatever injury he received, but rather rebuked those who did so. He managed all things with such exactness as if he had made it his study not to give offence.'

The final 'Declaration of Indulgence' came at last, bringing with it the privilege for which Bunyan had fought and suffered. Charles II. cared as little for liberty as his father or his brother, but he wished to set free the Catholics, and as a step towards it he conceded a general toleration to the Protestant Dissenters. Within two years of the passing of the Conventicle Act of 1670, this and every other penal law against Nonconformists was suspended. They were allowed to open their 'meeting houses' for 'worship and devotion,' subject only to a few easy conditions. The localities were to be specified in which chapels were required, and the ministers were to receive their licenses from the Crown. To prevent suspicions, the Roman Catholics were for the present excluded from the benefit of the concession. Mass could be said, as before, only in private houses. A year later the Proclamation was confirmed by Act of Parliament.

Thus Bunyan's long imprisonment was ended. The cause was won. He had been its foremost representative and champion, and was one of the first persons to receive the benefit of the change of policy. He was now forty-four years old. The order for his release was signed on May 8, 1672. His license as pastor of the Baptist chapel at Bedford was issued on the 9th. He established himself in a small house in the town. 'When he came abroad,' says one, 'he found his temporal affairs were gone to wreck, and he had as to them to begin again as if he had newly come into the world. But yet he was not destitute of friends who had all along supported him with necessities, and had been very good to his family : so that by



their assistance, getting things a little about him again, he resolved, as much as possible, to decline worldly business, and give himself wholly up to the service of God.' As much as possible; but not entirely. In 1685, being afraid of a return of persecution, he made over, as a precaution, his whole estate to his wife; 'All and singular his goods, chattels, debts, ready money, plate, rings, household stuff, apparel, utensils, brass, pewter, bedding, and all his other substance.' In this deed he still describes himself as a brazier. The language is that of a man in easy, if not ample circumstances. 'Though by reason of losses which he sustained by imprisonment,' says another biographer, 'his treasures swelled not to excess, he always had sufficient to live decently and creditably.' His writings and his sufferings had made him famous throughout England. He became the actual head of the Baptist community. Men called him, half in irony, half in seriousness, Bishop Bunyan, and he passed the rest of his life honourably and innocently, occupied in writing, preaching, district visiting, and opening daughter churches. Happy in his work, happy in the sense that his influence was daily extending—spreading over his own country, and to the far-off settlements in America, he spent his last years in his own land of Beulah, Doubting Castle out of sight, and the towers and minarets of Emmanuel Land growing nearer and clearer as the days went on.

He had not detected, or at least, at first, he did not detect, the sinister purpose which lay behind the Indulgence. The exception of the Roman Catholics gave him perfect confidence in the Government, and after his release he published a 'Discourse upon Antichrist,' with a preface, in which he credited Charles with the most righteous



intentions, and urged his countrymen to be loyal and faithful to him. His object in writing it, he said, 'was to testify his loyalty to the King, his love to the brethren, and his service to his country.' Antichrist was of course the Pope, the deadliest of all enemies to vital Christianity. To its kings and princes England owed its past deliverance from him. To kings England must look for his final overthrow.

'As the noble King Henry VIII. did cast down the Antichristian worship, so he cast down the laws that held it up; so also did the good King Edward his son. The brave Queen Elizabeth, also, the sister of King Edward, left of things of this nature to her lasting fame behind her.' Cromwell he dared not mention—perhaps he did not wish to mention him. But he evidently believed that there was better hope in Charles Stuart than in conspiracy and revolution.

'Kings,' he said, 'must be the men that shall down with Antichrist, and they shall down with her in God's time. God hath begun to draw the hearts of some of them from her already, and He will set them in time against her round about. If, therefore, they do not that work so fast as we would have them, let us exercise patience and hope in God. 'Tis a wonder they go as fast as they do since the concerns of whole kingdoms lie upon their shoulders, and there are so many Sanballats and Tobias's to flatter them and misinform them. Let the King have visibly a place in your hearts, and with heart and mouth give God thanks for him. He is a better Saviour of us than we may be aware of, and hath delivered us from more deaths than we can tell how to think. We are bidden to give God thanks for all men, and in the first place for kings, and all that are in autho-

riety. Be not angry with them, no not in thy thought. But consider if they go not in the work of Reformation so fast as thou wouldest they should, the fault may be thine. Know that thou also hast thy cold and chill frames of heart, and sittest still when thou shouldest be up and doing. Pray for the long life of the King. Pray that God would give wisdom and judgment to the King. Pray that God would discern all plots and conspiracies against his person and government. I do confess myself one of the old-fashioned professors that wish to fear God and honour the King. I am also for blessing them that curse me, for doing good to them that hate me, and for praying for them that despitefully use me and persecute me; and I have had more peace in the practice of these things than all the world are aware of.'

The Stuarts, both Charles and James, were grateful for Bunyan's services. The Nonconformists generally went up and down in Royal favour; lost their privileges and regained them as their help was needed or could be dispensed with. But Bunyan was never more molested. He did what he liked. He preached where he pleased, and no one troubled him or called him to account. He was not insincere. His constancy in enduring so long an imprisonment which a word from him would have ended, lifts him beyond the reach of unworthy suspicions. But he disapproved always of violent measures. His rule was to submit to the law; and where, as he said, he could not obey actively, then to bear with patience the punishment that might be inflicted on him. Perhaps he really hoped, as long as hope was possible, that good might come out of the Stuarts.

## CHAPTER VII.

### LIFE AND DEATH OF MR. BADMAN.

To his contemporaries Bunyan was known as the Non-conformist Martyr, and the greatest living Protestant preacher. To us he is mainly interesting through his writings, and especially through the 'Pilgrim's Progress.' Although he possessed, in a remarkable degree, the gift of expressing himself in written words, he had himself no value for literature. He cared simply for spiritual truth, and literature in his eyes was only useful as a means of teaching it. Every thing with which a reasonable man could concern himself was confined within the limits of Christian faith and practice. Ambition was folly. Amusement was idle trifling in a life so short as man's, and with issues so far-reaching depending upon it. To understand, and to make others understand, what Christ had done, and what Christ required men to do, was the occupation of his whole mind, and no object ever held his attention except in connection with it. With a purpose so strict, and a theory of religion so precise, there is usually little play for imagination or feeling. Though we read Protestant theology as a duty, we find it as dry in the mouth as sawdust. The literature which would please must represent nature, and nature refuses to be bound into our dogmatic systems. No object can be pictured truly, except by

a mind which has sympathy with it. Shakespeare no more hates Iago than Iago hates himself. He allows Iago to exhibit himself in his own way, as nature does. Every character, if justice is to be done to it, must be painted at its best, as it appears to itself; and a man impressed deeply with religious convictions is generally incapable of the sympathy which would give him an insight into what he disapproves and dislikes. And yet Bunyan, intensely religious as he was, and narrow as his theology was, is always human. His genius remains fresh and vigorous under the least promising conditions. All mankind being under sin together, he has no favourites to flatter, no opponents to misrepresent. There is a kindliness in his descriptions, even of the Evil One's attacks upon himself.

The 'Pilgrim's Progress,' though professedly an allegoric story of the Protestant plan of salvation, is conceived in the large, wide spirit of humanity itself. Anglo-Catholic and Lutheran, Calvinist and Deist can alike read it with delight, and find their own theories in it. Even the Romanist has only to blot out a few paragraphs, and can discover no purer model of a Christian life to place in the hands of his children. The religion of the 'Pilgrim's Progress' is the religion which must be always and everywhere, as long as man believes that he has a soul and is responsible for his actions; and thus it is that, while theological folios once devoured as manna from Heaven now lie on the bookshelves dead as Egyptian mummies, this book is wrought into the mind and memory of every well-conditioned English or American child; while the matured man, furnished with all the knowledge which literature can teach him, still finds the adventures of Christian as charming as the adventures of Ulysses or Æneas. He sees there the reflexion of

But how neatly expressed are these ‘Meditations upon an Egg’ :—

The egg’s no chick by falling from a hen,  
Nor man’s a Christian till he’s born again;  
The egg’s at first contained in the shell,  
Men afore grace in sin and darkness dwell;  
The egg, when laid, by warmth is made a chicken,  
And Christ by grace the dead in sin doth quicken;  
The egg when first a chick the shell’s its prison,  
So flesh to soul who yet with Christ is risen.

Or this, ‘On a Swallow’ :—

This pretty bird ! Oh, how she flies and sings;  
But could she do so if she had not wings ?  
Her wings bespeak my faith, her songs my peace ;  
When I believe and sing, my doubtings cease.

Though the Globe Theatre was, in the opinion of Nonconformists, ‘the heart of Satan’s empire,’ Bunyan must yet have known something of Shakespeare. In the second part of the ‘Pilgrim’s Progress’ we find :—

Who would true valour see,  
Let him come hither;  
One here will constant be,  
Come wind, come weather.

The resemblance to the song in ‘As You Like It’ is too near to be accidental :—

Who doth ambition shun,  
And loves to be in the sun;  
Seeking the food he eats,  
And pleased with what he gets,  
Come hither, come hither, come hither.  
Here shall be no enemy,  
Save winter and rough weather.



Bunyan may, perhaps, have heard the lines, and the rhymes may have clung to him without his knowing whence they came. But he would never have been heard of outside his own communion, if his imagination had found no better form of expression for itself than verse. His especial gift was for allegory, the single form of imaginative fiction which he would not have considered trivial, and his especial instrument was plain, unaffected Saxon prose. 'The Holy War' is a people's Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained in one. The 'Life of Mr. Badman' is a didactic tale, describing the career of a vulgar, middle-class, unprincipled scoundrel.

These are properly Bunyan's 'works,' the results of his life so far as it affects the present generation of Englishmen; and as they are little known, I shall give an account of each of them.

The 'Life of Badman' is presented as a dialogue between Mr. Wiseman and Mr. Attentive. Mr. Wiseman tells the story, Mr. Attentive comments upon it. The names recall Bunyan's well-known manner. The figures stand for typical characters; but as the *dramatis personæ* of many writers of fiction, while professing to be beings of flesh and blood are no more than shadows, so Bunyan's shadows are solid men whom we can feel and handle.

Mr. Badman is, of course, one of the 'reprobate.' Bunyan considered theoretically that a reprobate may to outward appearance have the graces of a saint, and that there may be little in his conduct to mark his true character. A reprobate may be sorry for his sins, he may repent and lead a good life. He may reverence good men and may try to resemble them; he may pray, and his prayers may be answered; he may have the spirit of God, and may receive another heart, and yet he may be under

the covenant of works, and may be eternally lost. This Bunyan could say while he was writing theology; but art has its rules as well as its more serious sister, and when he had to draw a living specimen, he drew him as he had seen him in his own Bedford neighbourhood.

Badman showed from childhood a propensity for evil. He was so 'addicted to lying that his parents could not distinguish when he was speaking the truth. He would invent, tell, and stand to the lies which he invented, with such an audacious face, that one might read in his very countenance the symptoms of a hard and desperate heart. It was not the fault of his parents; they were much dejected at the beginnings of their son, nor did he want counsel and correction, if that would have made him better: but all availed nothing.'

Lying was not Badman's only fault. He took to pilfering and stealing. He robbed his neighbours' orchards. He picked up money if he found it lying about. Especially, Mr. Wiseman notes that he hated Sundays. 'Reading Scriptures, godly conferences, repeating of sermons and prayers, were things that he could not away with.' 'He was an enemy to that day, because more restraint was laid upon him from his own ways than was possible on any other.' Mr. Wiseman never doubts that the Puritan Sunday ought to have been appreciated by little boys. If a child disliked it, the cause could only be his own wickedness. Young Badman 'was greatly given also to swearing and cursing.' 'He made no more of it' than Mr. Wiseman made 'of telling his fingers.' 'He counted it a glory to swear and curse, and it was as natural to him as to eat, drink, or sleep.' Bunyan, in this description, is supposed to have taken the picture from himself. But too much may be made of this. He

was thinking, perhaps, of what he might have been if God's grace had not preserved him. He himself was saved. Badman is represented as given over from the first. Anecdotes, however, are told of contemporary providential judgments upon swearers, which had much impressed Bunyan. One was of a certain Dorothy Mately, a woman whose business was to wash rubbish at the Derby lead mines. Dorothy (it was in the year when Bunyan was first imprisoned), had stolen twopence from the coat of a boy who was working near her. When the boy taxed her with having robbed him, she wished the ground might swallow her up if she had ever touched his money. Presently after, some children who were watching her, saw a movement in the bank on which she was standing. They called to her to take care, but it was too late. The bank fell in, and she was carried down along with it. A man ran to help her, but the sides of the pit were crumbling round her : a large stone fell on her head ; the rubbish followed, and she was overwhelmed. When she was dug out afterwards, the pence were found in her pocket. Bunyan was perfectly satisfied that her death was supernatural. To discover miracles is not peculiar to Catholics. They will be found wherever there is an active belief in immediate providential government.

Those more cautious in forming their conclusions will think, perhaps, that the woman was working above some shaft in the mine, that the crust had suddenly broken, and that it would equally have fallen in when gravitation required it to fall, if Dorothy Mately had been a saint. They will remember the words about the Tower of Siloam. But to return to Badman.

His father, being unable to manage so unpromising a child, bound him out as an apprentice. The master to

whom he was assigned was as good a man as the father could find : upright, Godfearing, and especially considerate of his servants. He never worked them too hard. He left them time to read and pray. He admitted no light or mischievous books within his doors. He was not one of those whose religion 'hung as a cloke in his house, and was never seen on him when he went abroad.' His household was as well fed and cared for as himself, and he required nothing of others of which he did not set them an example in his own person.

This man did his best to reclaim young Badman, and was particularly kind to him. But his exertions were thrown away. The good-for-nothing youth read filthy romances on the sly. He fell asleep in church, or made eyes at the pretty girls. He made acquaintance with low companions. He became profligate, got drunk at alehouses, told his master's property to get money, or stole it out of the cashbox. Thrice he ran away and was taken back again. The third time he was allowed to go. 'The House of Correction would have been the most fit for him, but thither his master was loath to send him, for the love he bore his father.'

He was again apprenticed ; this time to a master like himself. Being wicked he was given over to wickedness. The ways of it were not altogether pleasant. He was fed worse and he was worked harder than he had been before ; when he stole, or neglected his business, he was beaten. He liked his new place, however, better than the old. 'At least, there was no godliness in the house, which he hated worst of all.'

So far, Bunyan's hero was travelling the usual road of the Idle Apprentice, and the gallows would have been the commonplace ending of it. But this would not have



answered Bunyan's purpose. He wished to represent the good-for-nothing character, under the more instructive aspect of worldly success, which bad men may arrive at as well as good, if they are prudent and cunning. Bunyan gives his hero every chance. He submits him from the first to the best influences; he creates opportunities for repentance at every stage of a long career—opportunities which the reprobate nature cannot profit by, yet increases its guilt by neglecting.

Badman's term being out, his father gives him money and sets him up as a tradesman on his own account. Mr. Attentive considers this to have been a mistake. Mr. Wiseman answers that even in the most desperate cases, kindness in parents is more likely to succeed than severity, and if it fails they will have the less to reproach themselves with. The kindness is, of course, thrown away. Badman continues a loose blackguard, extravagant, idle and dissolute. He comes to the edge of ruin. His situation obliges him to think; and now the interest of the story begins. He must repair his fortune by some means or other. The easiest way is by marriage. There was a young orphan lady in the neighbourhood, who was well off and her own mistress. She was a 'professor' eagerly given to religion, and not so wise as she ought to have been. Badman pretends to be converted. He reforms, or seems to reform. He goes to meeting, sings hymns, adopts the most correct form of doctrine, tells the lady that he does not want her money, but that he wants a companion who will go with him along the road to Heaven. He was plausible, good-looking, and, to all appearance, as absorbed as herself in the one thing needful. The congregation warn her, but to no purpose. She



marries him, and finds what she has done too late. In her fortune he has all that he wanted. He swears at her, treats her brutally, brings prostitutes into his house, laughs at her religion, and at length orders her to give it up. When she refuses, Bunyan introduces a special feature of the times, and makes Badman threaten to turn informer, and bring her favourite minister to gaol. The informers were the natural but most accursed products of the Conventicle Acts. Popular abhorrence relieved itself by legends of the dreadful judgments which had overtaken these wretches.

In St. Neots an informer was bitten by a dog. The wound gangrened and the flesh rotted off his bones. In Bedford 'there was one W. S.' (Bunyan probably knew him too well), 'a man of very wicked life, and he, when there seemed to be countenance given to it, would needs turn informer. Well, so he did, and was as diligent in his business as most of them could be. He would watch at nights, climb trees and range the woods of days, if possible to find out the meeters, for then they were forced to meet in the fields. Yea, he would curse them bitterly, and swore most fearfully what he would do to them when he found them. Well, after he had gone on like a Bedlam in his course awhile, and had done some mischief to the people, he was stricken by the hand of God. He was taken with a faltering in his speech, a weakness in the back sinews of his neck, that ofttimes he held up his head by strength of hand. After this his speech went quite away, and he could speak no more than a swine or a bear. Like one of them he would gruntle and make an ugly noise, according as he was offended or pleased, or would have anything done. He walked about till God had made a sufficient spectacle of his judgments

for his sin, and then, on a sudden, he was stricken, and died miserably.'

Badman, says Mr. Wiseman, 'had malice enough in his heart' to turn informer, but he was growing prudent and had an eye to the future. As a tradesman he had to live by his neighbours. He knew that they would not forgive him, so 'he had that wit in his anger that he did it not.' Nothing else was neglected to make the unfortunate wife miserable. She bore him seven children, also typical figures. 'One was a very gracious child, that loved its mother dearly. This child Mr. Badman could not abide, and it oftenest felt the weight of its father's fingers. Three were as bad as himself. The others that remained became a kind of mongrel professors, not so bad as their father nor so good as their mother, but betwixt them both. They had their mother's notions and their father's actions. Their father did not like them because they had their mother's tongue. Their mother did not like them because they had their father's heart and life, nor were they fit company for good or bad. They were forced with Esau to join in affinity with Ishmael, to wit, to look out for a people that were hypocrites like themselves, and with them they matched and lived and died.'

Badman meanwhile, with the help of his wife's fortune, grew into an important person, and his character becomes a curious study. 'He went,' we are told, 'to school with the Devil, from his childhood to the end of his life.' He was shrewd in matters of business, began to extend his operations, and 'drove a great trade.' He carried a double face. He was evil with the evil. He pretended to be good with the good. In religion he affected to be a free-thinker, careless of death and judgment, and ridiculing those who feared them 'as frightened with unseen bugbears.'

But he wore a mask when it suited him, and admired himself for the ease with which he could assume whatever aspect was convenient. 'I can be religious and irreligious,' he said; 'I can be anything or nothing. I can swear and speak against swearing. I can lie and speak against lying. I can drink, wench, be unclean, and defraud, and not be troubled for it. I can enjoy myself and am master of my own ways, not they of me. This I have attained with much study, care, and pains.' 'An Atheist Badman was, if such a thing as an Atheist could be. He was not alone in that mystery. There was abundance of men of the same mind and the same principle. He was only an arch or chief one among them.'

Mr. Badman now took to speculation, which Bunyan's knowledge of business enabled him to describe with instructive minuteness. His adventures were on a large scale, and by some mistakes and by personal extravagance he had nearly ruined himself a second time. In this condition he discovered a means, generally supposed to be a more modern invention, of 'getting money by hatfuls.'

'He gave a sudden and great rush into several men's debts to the value of four or five thousand pounds, driving at the same time a very great trade by selling many things for less than they cost him, to get him custom and blind his creditors' eyes. When he had well feathered his nest with other men's goods and money, after a little while he breaks; while he had by craft and knavery made so sure of what he had, that his creditors could not touch a penny. He sends mournful sugared letters to them, desiring them not to be severe with him, for he bore towards all men an honest mind, and would pay them as far as he was able. He talked of the greatness of the taxes, the badness of the times, his losses by bad debts, and he brought them to a

composition to take five shillings in the pound. His release was signed and sealed, and Mr. Badman could now put his head out of doors again, and be a better man than when he shut up shop by several thousands of pounds.'

Twice or three times he repeated the same trick with equal success. It is likely enough that Bunyan was drawing from life and perhaps from a member of his own congregation; for he says that 'he had known a professor do it.' He detested nothing so much as sham religion which was put on as a pretence. 'A professor,' he exclaims, 'and practise such villanies as these! Such an one is not worthy the name. Go professors, go—leave off profession unless you will lead your lives according to your profession. Better never profess than make profession a stalking horse to sin, deceit, the devil, and hell.'

Bankruptcy was not the only art by which Badman piled up his fortune. The seventeenth century was not so far behind us as we sometimes persuade ourselves. 'He dealt by deceitful weights and measures. He kept weights to buy by and weights to sell by, measures to buy by and measures to sell by. Those he bought by were too big, and those he sold by were too little. If he had to do with other men's weights and measures, he could use a thing called sleight of hand. He had the art besides to misreckon men in their accounts, whether by weight or measure or money; and if a question was made of his faithful dealing, he had his servants ready that would vouch and swear to his look or word. He would sell goods that cost him not the best price by far, for as much as he sold his best of all for. He had also a trick to mingle his commodity, that that which was bad might go off with the least mistrust. If any of his customers paid him money, he would call for payment a second



time, and if they could not produce good and sufficient ground of the payment, a hundred to one but they paid it again.'

'To buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest' was Mr. Badman's common rule in business. According to modern political economy, it is the cardinal principle of wholesome trade. In Bunyan's opinion it was knavery in disguise, and certain to degrade and demoralise everyone who acted upon it. Bunyan had evidently thought on the subject. Mr. Attentive is made to object:—

'But you know that there is no settled price set by God upon any commodity that is bought or sold under the sun; but all things that we buy and sell do ebb and flow as to price like the tide. How then shall a man of tender conscience do, neither to wrong the seller, buyer, nor himself in the buying and selling of commodities?'

Mr. Wiseman answers in the spirit of our old Acts of Parliament, before political economy was invented:—

'Let a man have conscience towards God, charity to his neighbours, and moderation in dealing. Let the tradesman consider that there is not that in great gettings and in abundance which the most of men do suppose; for all that a man has over and above what serves for his present necessity and supply, serves only to feed the lusts of the eye. Be thou confident that God's eyes are upon thy ways; that He marks them, writes them down, and seals them up in a bag against the time to come. Be sure that thou rememberest that thou knowest not the day of thy death. Thou shalt have nothing that thou mayest so much as carry away in thy hand. Guilt shall go with thee if thou hast gotten thy substance dishonestly, and they to whom thou shalt leave it shall receive it to their



hurt. These things duly considered, I will shew thee how thou should'st live in the practical part of this art. Art thou to buy or sell? If thou sellest do not commend. If thou buyest do not dispraise, any otherwise but to give the thing that thou hast to do with its just value and worth. Art thou a seller and do things grow cheap? set not thy hand to help or hold them up higher. Art thou a buyer and do things grow dear? use no cunning or deceitful language to pull them down. Leave things to the Providence of God, and do thou with moderation submit to his hand. Hurt not thy neighbour by crying out Scarcity, scarcity! beyond the truth of things. Especially take heed of doing this by way of a prognostic for time to come. This wicked thing may be done by hoarding up (food) when the hunger and necessity of the poor calls for it. If things rise do thou be grieved. Be also moderate in all thy sellings, and be sure let the poor have a penny-worth, and sell thy corn to those who are in necessity; which thou wilt do when thou showest mercy to the poor in thy selling to him, and when thou undersellest the market for his sake because he is poor. This is to buy and sell with a good conscience. The buyer thou wrongest not, thy conscience thou wrongest not, thyself thou wrongest not, for God will surely recompense with thee.'

These views of Bunyan's are at issue with modern science, but his principles and ours are each adjusted to the objects of desire which good men in those days and good men in ours have respectively set before themselves. If wealth means money, as it is now assumed to do, Bunyan is wrong and modern science right. If wealth means moral welfare, then those who aim at it will do well to follow Bunyan's advice. It is to be feared that this part

time, and if they could not produce good and sufficient ground of the payment, a hundred to one but they paid it again.'

'To buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest' was Mr. Badman's common rule in business. According to modern political economy, it is the cardinal principle of wholesome trade. In Bunyan's opinion it was knavery in disguise, and certain to degrade and demoralise everyone who acted upon it. Bunyan had evidently thought on the subject. Mr. Attentive is made to object:—

'But you know that there is no settled price set by God upon any commodity that is bought or sold under the sun; but all things that we buy and sell do ebb and flow as to price like the tide. How then shall a man of tender conscience do, neither to wrong the seller, buyer, nor himself in the buying and selling of commodities?'

Mr. Wiseman answers in the spirit of our old Acts of Parliament, before political economy was invented:—

'Let a man have conscience towards God, charity to his neighbours, and moderation in dealing. Let the tradesman consider that there is not that in great gettings and in abundance which the most of men do suppose; for all that a man has over and above what serves for his present necessity and supply, serves only to feed the lusts of the eye. Be thou confident that God's eyes are upon thy ways; that He marks them, writes them down, and seals them up in a bag against the time to come. Be sure that thou rememberest that thou knowest not the day of thy death. Thou shalt have nothing that thou mayest so much as carry away in thy hand. Guilt shall go with thee if thou hast gotten thy substance dishonestly, and they to whom thou shalt leave it shall receive it to their

hurt. These things duly considered, I will shew thee how thou should'st live in the practical part of this art. Art thou to buy or sell? If thou sellest do not commend. If thou buyest do not dispraise, any otherwise but to give the thing that thou hast to do with its just value and worth. Art thou a seller and do things grow cheap? set not thy hand to help or hold them up higher. Art thou a buyer and do things grow dear? use no cunning or deceitful language to pull them down. Leave things to the Providence of God, and do thou with moderation submit to his hand. Hurt not thy neighbour by crying out Scarcity, scarcity! beyond the truth of things. Especially take heed of doing this by way of a prognostic for time to come. This wicked thing may be done by hoarding up (food) when the hunger and necessity of the poor calls for it. If things rise do thou be grieved. Be also moderate in all thy sellings, and be sure let the poor have a penny-worth, and sell thy corn to those who are in necessity; which thou wilt do when thou showest mercy to the poor in thy selling to him, and when thou undersellest the market for his sake because he is poor. This is to buy and sell with a good conscience. The buyer thou wrongest not, thy conscience thou wrongest not, thyself thou wrongest not, for God will surely recompense with thee.'

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of his doctrine is less frequently dwelt upon by those who profess to admire and follow him, than the theory of imputed righteousness or justification by faith.

Mr. Badman by his various ingenuities became a wealthy man. His character as a tradesman could not have been a secret from his neighbours, but money and success coloured it over. The world spoke well of him. He became 'proud and haughty,' took part in public affairs, 'counted himself as wise as the wisest in the country, as good as the best, and as beautiful as he that had the most of it.' 'He took great delight in praising himself, and as much in the praises that others gave him.' 'He could not abide that any should think themselves above him, or that their wit and personage should be by others set before his.' He had an objection, nevertheless, to being called proud, and when Mr. Attentive asked why, his companion answered with a touch which reminds us of De Foe, that '*Badman did not tell him the reason.* He supposed it to be that which was common to all vile persons. They loved their vice, but cared not to bear its name.' Badman said he was unwilling to seem singular and fantastical, and in this way he justified his expensive and luxurious way of living. Singularity of all kinds he affected to dislike, and for that reason his special pleasure was to note the faults of professors. 'If he could get anything by the end that had scandal in it, if it did but touch professors, however falsely reported, oh, then he would glory, laugh and be glad, and lay it upon the whole party. Hang these rogues, he would say, there is not a barrel better herring in all the holy brotherhood of them. Like to like, quoth the Devil to the collier. This is your precise crew, and then he would send them all home with a curse.'



Thus Bunyan developed his specimen scoundrel, till he brought him to the high altitudes of worldly prosperity; skilful in every villanous art, skilful equally in keeping out of the law's hands, and feared, admired and respected by all his neighbours. The reader who desires to see Providence vindicated would now expect to find him detected in some crimes by which justice could lay hold, and poetical retribution fall upon him in the midst of his triumph. An inferior artist would certainly have allowed his story to end in this way. But Bunyan, satisfied though he was that dramatic judgments did overtake offenders in this world with direct and startling appropriateness, was yet aware that it was often otherwise, and that the worst fate which could be inflicted on a completely worthless person was to allow him to work out his career unvisited by any penalties which might have disturbed his conscience and occasioned his amendment. He chose to make his story natural, and to confine himself to natural machinery. The judgment to come Mr. Badman laughed at 'as old woman's fable,' but his courage lasted only as long as he was well and strong. One night as he was riding home drunk, his horse fell and he broke his leg. 'You would not think,' says Mr. Wiseman, 'how he swore at first. Then coming to himself, and finding he was badly hurt, he cried out, after the manner of such, Lord help me; Lord have mercy on me; good God deliver me, and the like. He was picked up and taken home, where he lay some time. In his pain he called on God, but whether it was that his sin might be pardoned and his soul saved, or whether to be rid of his pain,' Mr. Wiseman 'could not determine.' This leads to several stories of drunkards which Bunyan clearly believed to be literally true. Such facts or legends were the



food on which his mind had been nourished. They were in the air which contemporary England breathed.

‘I have read in Mr. Clarke’s Looking-glass for Sinners,’ Mr. Wiseman said, ‘that upon a time a certain drunken fellow boasted in his cups that there was neither heaven nor hell. Also he said. he believed that man had no soul, and that for his own part he would sell his soul to any that would buy it. Then did one of his companions buy it of him for a cup of wine, and presently the devil, in man’s shape, bought it of that man again at the same price; and so in the presence of them all laid hold of the soul-seller, and carried him away through the air so that he was no more heard of.’

Again :

‘There was one at Salisbury drinking and carousing at a tavern, and he drank a health to the devil, saying that if the devil would not come and pledge him, he could not believe that there was either God or devil. Whereupon his companions, stricken with fear, hastened out of the room, and presently after, hearing a hideous noise and smelling a stinking savour, the vintner ran into the chamber, and coming in he missed his guest, and found the window broken, the iron bars in it bowed and all bloody, but the man was never heard of afterwards.’

These visitations were answers to a direct challenge of the evil spirit’s existence, and were thus easy to be accounted for. But no devil came for Mr. Badman. He clung to his unfortunate neglected wife. ‘She became his dear wife, his godly wife, his honest wife, his duck, his dear and all.’ He thought he was dying, and hell and all its horrors rose up before him. ‘Fear was in his face, and in his tossings to and fro he would often say I am undone, I am undone, my vile life hath undone me.’

Atheism did not help him. It never helped anyone in such extremities Mr. Wiseman said; as he had known in another instance:—

‘There was a man dwelt about twelve miles off from us,’ he said, ‘that had so trained up himself in his Atheistical notions, that at last he attempted to write a book against Jesus Christ and the Divine authority of the Scriptures. I think it was not printed. Well, after many days God struck him with sickness whereof he died. So being sick, and musing of his former doings, the book that he had written tore his conscience as a lion would tear a kid. Some of my friends went to see him, and as they were in his chamber one day he hastily called for pen and ink and paper, which, when it was given to him, he took it and writ to this purpose. “I such an one in such a town must go to hell fire for writing a book against Jesus Christ.” He would have leaped out of the window to have killed himself, but was by them prevented of that, so he died in his bed by such a death as it was.’

Badman seemed equally miserable. But death-bed repentances, as Bunyan sensibly said, were seldom of more value than ‘the howling of a dog.’ The broken leg was set again. The pain of body went, and with it the pain of mind. He was assisted out of his uneasiness, says Bunyan, with a characteristic hit at the scientific views then coming into fashion, ‘by his doctor,’ who told him that his alarms had come ‘from an affection of the brain, caused by want of sleep;’ ‘they were nothing but vapours and the effects of his distemper.’ He gathered his spirits together, and became the old man once more. His poor wife, who had believed him penitent, broke her heart, and died of the disappointment. The husband gave himself up to loose connections with

abandoned women, one of whom persuaded him one day, when he was drunk, to make her a promise of marriage, and she held him to his word. Then retribution came upon him, with the coarse, commonplace, yet rigid justice which fact really deals out. The second bad wife avenged the wrongs of the first innocent wife. He was mated with a companion 'who could fit him with cursing and swearing, give him oath for oath, and curse for curse. They would fight and fly at each other like cat and dog.' In this condition—for Bunyan, before sending his hero to his account, gave him a protracted spell of earthly discomforts—they lived sixteen years together. Fortune, who had so long favoured his speculations, turned her back upon him. Between them they 'sinned all his wealth away,' and at last parted 'as poor as howlets.'

Then came the end. Badman was still in middle life, and had naturally a powerful constitution; but his 'cups and his queans' had undermined his strength. Dropsy came, and gout, with worse in his bowels, and 'on the top of them all, as the captain of the men of death that came to take him away,' consumption. Bunyan was a true artist, though he knew nothing of the rules, and was not aware that he was an artist at all. He was not to be tempted into spoiling a natural story with the melodramatic horrors of a sinner's deathbed. He had let his victim 'howl' in the usual way, when he meant him to recover. He had now simply to conduct him to the gate of the place where he was to receive the reward of his iniquities. It was enough to bring him thither still impenitent, with the grave solemnity with which a felon is taken to execution.

'As his life was full of sin,' says Mr. Wiseman, 'so his death was without repentance. He had not, in all

the time of his sickness, a sight and a sense of his sins; but was as much at quiet as if he had never sinned in his life: he was as secure as if he had been sinless as an angel. When he drew near his end, there was no more alteration in him than what was made by his disease upon his body. He was the selfsame Mr. Badman still, not only in name, but in condition, and that to the very day of his death and the moment in which he died. There seemed not to be in it to the standers by so much as a strong struggle of nature. He died like a lamb, or, as men call it, like a chrisom child, quietly and without fear.'

To which end of Mr. Badman Bunyan attaches the following remarks: 'If a wicked man, if a man who has lived all his days in notorious sin, dies quietly, his quiet dying is so far from being a sign of his being saved that it is an incontestable proof of his damnation. No man can be saved except he repents; nor can he repent that knows not that he is a sinner: and he that knows himself to be a sinner will, I warrant him, be molested for his knowledge before he can die quietly. I am no admirer of sick-bed repentance; for I think verily it is seldom good for anything. But I see that he that hath lived in sin and profaneness all his days, as Badman did, and yet shall die quietly, that is, without repentance steps in between his life and his death, is assuredly gone to hell. When God would show the greatness of his anger against sin and sinners in one word, He saith, Let them alone! Let them alone—that is, disturb them not. Let them go on without control. Let the devil enjoy them peaceably. Let him carry them out of the world unconverted quietly. This is the sorest of judgments. I do not say that all wicked men that are molested at their



death with a sense of sin and fear of hell do therefore go to heaven ; for some are made to see and are left to despair. But I say there is no surer sign of a man's damnation than to die quietly after a sinful life, than to sin and die with a heart that cannot repent. The opinion, therefore, of the common people of this kind of death is frivolous and vain.'

So ends this very remarkable story. It is extremely interesting, merely as a picture of vulgar English life in a provincial town such as Bedford was when Bunyan lived there. The drawing is so good, the details so minute, the conception so unexaggerated, that we are disposed to believe that we must have a real history before us. But such a supposition is only a compliment to the skill of the composer. Bunyan's inventive faculty was a spring that never ran dry. He had a manner, as I said, like De Foe's, of creating the illusion that we are reading realities, by little touches such as 'I do not know,' 'He did not tell me this,' or the needless introduction of particulars irrelevant to the general plot such as we always stumble on in life, and writers of fiction usually omit. Bunyan was never prosecuted for libel by 'Badman's' relations, and the character is the corresponding contrast to Christian in the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' the pilgrim's journey being in the opposite direction to the other place. Throughout we are on the solid earth, amidst real experiences. No demand is made on our credulity by Providential interpositions, except in the intercalated anecdotes which do not touch the story itself. The wicked man's career is not brought to the abrupt or sensational issues so much in favour with ordinary didactic tale-writers. Such issues are the exception, not the rule, and the edifying story loses its effect when the



reader turns from it to actual life, and perceives that the majority are not punished in any such way. Bunyan conceals nothing, assumes nothing, and exaggerates nothing. He makes his bad man sharp and shrewd. He allows sharpness and shrewdness to bring him the rewards which such qualities in fact command. Badman is successful, he is powerful; he enjoys all the pleasures which money can buy; his bad wife helps him to ruin, but otherwise he is not unhappy, and he dies in peace. Bunyan has made him a brute, because such men do become brutes. It is the real punishment of brutal and selfish habits. There the figure stands; a picture of a man in the rank of English life with which Bunyan was most familiar, travelling along the primrose path to the everlasting bonfire, as the way to Emmanuel's Land was through the Slough of Despond and the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Pleasures are to be found among the primroses, such pleasures as a brute can be gratified by. Yet the reader feels that even if there was no bonfire, he would still prefer to be with Christian.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE HOLY WAR.

THE supernatural has been successfully represented in poetry, painting, or sculpture, only at particular periods of human history, and under peculiar mental conditions. The artist must himself believe in the supernatural, or his description of it will be a sham, without dignity and without credibility. He must feel himself able at the same time to treat the subject which he selects with freedom, throwing his own mind boldly into it, or he will produce, at best, the hard and stiff forms of literal tradition. When Benvenuto Cellini was preparing to make an image of the Virgin, he declares gravely that Our Lady appeared to him that he might know what she was like; and so real was the apparition that for many months after, he says that his friends when the room was dark could see a faint aureole about his head. Yet Benvenuto worked as if his own brain was partly the author of what he produced, and, like other contemporary artists, used his mistresses for his models, and was no servile copyist of phantoms seen in visions. There is a truth of the imagination, and there is a truth of fact, religion hovering between them, translating one into the other, turning natural phenomena into the activity of personal beings; or giving earthly names and habitations to mere

creatures of fancy. Imagination creates a mythology. The priest takes it and fashions out of it a theology, a ritual, or a sacred history. So long as the priest can convince the world that he is dealing with literal facts, he holds reason prisoner, and imagination is his servant. In the twilight when dawn is coming near but has not yet come; when the uncertain nature of the legend is felt, though not intelligently discerned; imagination is the first to resume its liberty; it takes possession of its own inheritance, it dreams of its gods and demi-gods, as Benvenuto dreamt of the Virgin, and it re-shapes the priest's traditions in noble and beautiful forms. Homer and the Greek dramatists would not have dared to bring the gods upon the stage so freely, had they believed Zeus and Apollo were living persons, like the man in the next street, who might call the poet to account for what they were made to do and say; but neither, on the other hand, could they have been actively conscious that Zeus and Apollo were phantoms, which had no existence, except in their own brains.

The condition is extremely peculiar. It can exist only in certain epochs, and in its nature is necessarily transitory. Where belief is consciously gone the artist has no reverence for his work, and therefore can inspire none. The greatest genius in the world could not reproduce another Athene like that of Phidias. But neither must the belief be too complete. The poet's tongue stammers when he would bring beings before us who, though invisible, are awful personal existences, in whose stupendous presence we one day expect to stand. As long as the conviction survives that he is dealing with literal truths, he is safe only while he follows with shoeless feet the letter of the tradition. He dares not step beyond, lest he degrade the

Infinite to the human level, and if he is wise he prefers to content himself with humbler subjects. A Christian artist can represent Jesus Christ as a man because He was a man, and because the details of the Gospel history leave room for the imagination to work. To represent Christ as the Eternal Son in heaven, to bring before us the Persons of the Trinity consulting, planning, and reasoning, to take us into their everlasting Council Chamber, as Homer takes us into Olympus, will be possible only when Christianity ceases to be regarded as a history of true facts. Till then it is a trespass beyond the permitted limits, and revolts us by the inadequacy of the result. Either the artist fails altogether by attempting the impossible, or those whom he addresses are themselves intellectually injured by an unreal treatment of truths hitherto sacred. They confound the representation with its object, and regard the whole of it as unreal together.

These observations apply most immediately to Milton's 'Paradise Lost,' and are meant to explain the unsatisfactoriness of it. Milton himself was only partially emancipated from the bondage of the letter; half in earth, half 'pawing to get free' like his own lion. The war in heaven, the fall of the rebel angels, the horrid splendours of Pandemonium seem legitimate subjects for Christian poetry. They stand for something which we regard as real, yet we are not bound to any actual opinions about them. Satan has no claim on reverential abstinence; and Paradise and the Fall of Man are perhaps sufficiently mythic to permit poets to take certain liberties with them. But even so far Milton has not entirely succeeded. His wars of the angels are shadowy. They have no substance like the battles of Greeks and Trojans, or Centaurs and Lapithæ; and Satan could not be

made interesting without touches of a nobler nature, that is, without ceasing to be the Satan of the Christian religion. But this is not his worst. When we are carried up into heaven and hear the persons of the Trinity conversing on the mischiefs which have crept into the universe, and planning remedies and schemes of salvation like Puritan divines, we turn away incredulous and resentful. Theologians may form such theories for themselves, if not wisely, yet without offence. They may study the world in which they are placed, with the light which can be thrown upon it by the book which they call the Word of God. They may form their conclusions, invent their schemes of doctrine, and commend to their flocks the interpretation of the mystery at which they have arrived. The cycles and epicycles of the Ptolemaic astronomers were imperfect hypotheses, but they were stages on which the mind could rest for a more complete examination of the celestial phenomena. But the poet does not offer us phrases and formulas; he presents to us personalities living and active, influenced by emotions and reasoning from premises; and when the unlimited and incomprehensible Being whose attributes are infinite, of whom from the inadequacy of our ideas we can only speak in negatives, is brought on the stage to talk like an ordinary man, we feel that Milton has mistaken the necessary limits of his art.

When Faust claims affinity with the Erdgeist, the spirit tells him to seek affinities with beings which he can comprehend. The commandment which forbade the representation of God in a bodily form, forbids the poet equally to make God describe his feelings and his purposes. Where the poet would create a character he must himself comprehend it first to its inmost fibre. He can-



not comprehend his own Creator. Admire as we may 'Paradise Lost;' try as we may to admire 'Paradise Regained;' acknowledge as we must the splendour of the imagery and the stately march of the verse; there comes upon us irresistibly a sense of the unfitness of the subject for Milton's treatment of it. If the story which he tells us is true, it is too momentous to be played with in poetry. We prefer to hear it in plain prose, with a minimum of ornament and the utmost possible precision of statement. Milton himself had not arrived at thinking it to be a legend, a fiction like the Greek Mythology. His poem falls between two modes of treatment and two conceptions of truth; we wonder, we recite, we applaud, but something comes in between our minds and a full enjoyment, and it will not satisfy us better as time goes on.

The same objection applies to 'The Holy War' of Bunyan. It is as I said, a people's version of the same series of subjects—the creation of man, the fall of man, his redemption, his ingratitude, his lapse, and again his restoration. The chief figures are the same, the action is the same, though more varied and complicated, and the general effect is unsatisfactory from the same cause. Prose is less ambitious than poetry. There is an absence of attempts at grand effects. There is no effort after sublimity, and there is consequently a lighter sense of incongruity in the failure to reach it. On the other hand, there is the greater fulness of detail so characteristic of Bunyan's manner; and fulness of detail on a theme so far beyond our understanding is as dangerous as vague grandiloquence. In 'The Pilgrim's Progress' we are among genuine human beings. The reader knows the road too well which Christian follows. He has struggled with

him in the Slough of Despond. He has shuddered with him in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. He has groaned with him in the dungeons of Doubting Castle. He has encountered on his journey the same fellow-travellers. Who does not know Mr. Pliable, Mr. Obstinate, Mr. Facing-both-ways, Mr. Feeble Mind, and all the rest? They are representative realities, flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. 'If we prick them they bleed, if we tickle them they laugh,' or they make us laugh. 'They are warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer' as we are. But the actors in 'The Holy War' are parts of men—special virtues, special vices: allegories in fact as well as in name, which all Bunyan's genius can only occasionally substantiate into persons. The plot of 'The Pilgrim's Progress' is simple. 'The Holy War' is prolonged through endless vicissitudes, with a doubtful issue after all, and the incomprehensibility of the Being who allows Satan to defy him so long and so successfully is unpleasantly and harshly brought home to us. True it is so in life. Evil remains after all that has been done for us. But life is confessedly a mystery. 'The Holy War' professes to interpret the mystery, and only restates the problem in a more elaborate form. Man Friday on reading it would have asked even more emphatically, 'Why God not kill the Devil?' and Robinson Crusoe would have found no assistance in answering him. For these reasons, I cannot agree with Macaulay in thinking that if there had been no 'Pilgrim's Progress,' 'The Holy War' would have been the first of religious allegories. We may admire the workmanship, but the same undefined sense of unreality which pursues us through Milton's epic would have interfered equally with the acceptance of this. The question to us is if the facts

are true. If true they require no allegories to touch either our hearts or our intellects.

'The Holy War' would have entitled Bunyan to a place among the masters of English literature. It would never have made his name a household word in every English-speaking family on the globe.

The story which I shall try to tell in an abridged form is introduced by a short prefatory poem. Works of fancy, Bunyan tells us, are of many sorts, according to the author's humour. For himself he says to his reader :

I have something else to do  
Than write vain stories thus to trouble you.  
What here I say some men do know too well ;  
They can with tears and joy the story tell.  
The town of Mansoul is well known to many,  
Nor are her troubles doubted of by any  
That are acquainted with those histories  
That Mansoul and her wars anatomize.

Then lend thine ears to what I do relate  
Touching the town of Mansoul and her state,  
How she was lost, took captive, made a slave,  
And how against him set that should her save,  
Yea, how by hostile ways she did oppose  
Her Lord and with his enemy did close,  
For they are true ; he that will them deny  
Must needs the best of records vilify.

For my part, I myself was in the town  
Both when 'twas set up and when pulling down.  
I saw Diabolus in his possession,  
And Mansoul also under his oppression :  
Yea I was there when she him owned for Lord,  
And to him did submit with one accord.

When Mansoul trampled upon things divine,  
And wallowed in filth as doth a swine,

When she betook herself unto his arms,  
Fought her Emmanuel, despised his charms;  
Then was I there and did rejoice to see  
Diabolus and Mansoul so agree.

Let no man count me then a fable maker,  
Nor make my name or credit a partaker  
Of their derision. What is here in view  
Of mine own knowledge I dare say is true.

At setting out we are introduced into the famous continent of 'Universe,' a large and spacious country lying between the two poles—'the people of it not all of one complexion nor yet of one language, mode or way of religion; but differing as much as the planets themselves, some right, some wrong, even as it may happen to be.'

In this country of 'Universe' was a fair and delicate town and corporation called 'Mansoul,' a town for its building so curious, for its situation so commodious, for its privileges so advantageous, that with reference to its original (state) there was not its equal under heaven. The first founder was Shaddai, who built it for his own delight. In the midst of the town was a famous and stately palace which Shaddai intended for himself.<sup>1</sup> He had no intention of allowing strangers to intrude there. And the peculiarity of the place was that the walls of Mansoul<sup>2</sup> could never be broken down or hurt unless the townsmen consented. Mansoul had five gates which in like manner could only be forced if those within allowed it. These gates were Eargate, Eyegate, Mouthgate, Nosegate, and Feelgate. Thus provided, Mansoul

<sup>1</sup> Bunyan says in a marginal note, that by this palace he means the heart.

<sup>2</sup> The body.

was at first all that its founder could desire. It had the most excellent laws in the world. There was not a rogue or a rascal inside its whole precincts. The inhabitants were all true men.

Now there was a certain giant named Diabolus—king of the blacks or negroes, as Bunyan noticeably calls them—the negroes standing for sinners or fallen angels. Diabolus had once been a servant of Shaddai, one of the chief in his territories. Pride and ambition had led him to aspire to the crown which was settled on Shaddai's Son. He had formed a conspiracy and planned a revolution. Shaddai and his Son, 'being all eye,' easily detected the plot. Diabolus and his crew were bound in chains, banished, and thrown into a pit, there to 'abide for ever.' This was their sentence; but out of the pit, in spite of it, they in some way contrived to escape. They ranged about full of malice against Shaddai, and looking for means to injure him. They came at last on Mansoul. They determined to take it, and called a council to consider how it could best be done. Diabolus was aware of the condition that no one could enter without the inhabitants' consent. Alecto, Apollyon, Beelzebub, Lucifer (Pagan and Christian demons intermixed indifferently) gave their several opinions. Diabolus at length at Lucifer's suggestion decided to assume the shape of one of the creatures over which Mansoul had dominion; and he selected as the fittest that of a snake, which at that time was in great favour with the people as both harmless and wise.

The population of Mansoul were simple, innocent folks who believed everything that was said to them. Force, however, might be necessary as well as cunning, and the Tisiphone, a fury of the Lakes, was required to assist.



The attempt was to be made at Eargate. A certain Captain Resistance was in charge of this gate, whom Diabolus feared more than any one in the place. Tisiphone was to shoot him.

The plans being all laid, Diabolus in his snake's dress approached the wall, accompanied by one 'Ill Pause,' a famous orator, the Fury following behind. He asked for a parley with the heads of the town. Captain Resistance, two of the great nobles, Lord 'Innocent,' and Lord 'Will be Will,' with Mr. Conscience, the Recorder, and Lord Understanding, the Lord Mayor, came to the gate to see what he wanted. Lord 'Will be Will' plays a prominent part in the drama both for good and evil. He is neither Free Will, nor Wilfulness, nor Inclination, but the quality which metaphysicians and theologians agree in describing as 'the Will.' 'The Will' simply—a subtle something of great importance; but what it is they have never been able to explain.

Lord Will be Will inquired Diabolus's business. Diabolus, 'meek as a lamb,' said he was a neighbour of theirs. He had observed with distress that they were living in a state of slavery, and he wished to help them to be free. Shaddai was no doubt a great prince, but he was an arbitrary despot. There was no liberty where the laws were unreasonable, and Shaddai's laws were the reverse of reasonable. They had a fruit growing among them, in Mansoul, which they had but to eat to become wise. Knowledge was well known to be the best of possessions. Knowledge was freedom; ignorance was bondage; and yet Shaddai had forbidden them to touch this precious fruit.

At that moment Captain Resistance fell dead, pierced by an arrow from Tisiphone. Ill Pause made a flowing

speech, in the midst of which Lord Innocent fell also, either through a blow from Diabolus, or 'overpowered by the stinking breath of the old villain Ill Pause.' The people flew upon the apple tree; Eargate and Eyegate were thrown open, and Diabolus was invited to come in; when at once he became King of Mansoul and established himself in the castle.<sup>1</sup>

The magistrates were immediately changed. Lord Understanding ceased to be Lord Mayor. Mr. Conscience was no longer left as Recorder. Diabolus built up a wall in front of Lord Understanding's palace, and shut off the light, 'so that till Mansoul was delivered the old Lord Mayor was rather an impediment than an advantage to that famous town.' Diabolus tried long to bring 'Conscience' over to his side, but never quite succeeded. The Recorder became greatly corrupted, but he could not be prevented from now and then remembering Shaddai; and when the fit was on him he would shake the town with his exclamations. Diabolus therefore had to try other methods with him. 'He had a way to make the old gentleman when he was merry unsay and deny what in his fits he had affirmed, and this was the next way to make him ridiculous and to cause that no man should regard him.' To make all secure Diabolus often said, 'Oh, Mansoul, consider that, notwithstanding the old gentleman's rage and the rattle of his high thundering words, you hear nothing of Shaddai himself.' The Recorder had pretended that the voice of the Lord was speaking in him. Had this been so, Diabolus argued that the Lord would have done more than speak. 'Shaddai,' he said, 'valued not the loss nor the rebellion of Mansoul, nor would he trouble himself with calling his town to a reckoning.'

<sup>1</sup> The heart.

In this way the Recorder came to be generally hated, and more than once the people would have destroyed him. Happily his house was a castle near the waterworks. When the rabble pursued him, he would pull up the sluices,<sup>1</sup> let in the flood, and drown all about him.

Lord Will be Will, on the other hand, 'as high born as any in Mansoul,' became Diabolus's principal minister. He had been the first to propose admitting Diabolus, and he was made Captain of the Castle, Governor of the Wall, and Keeper of the Gates. Will be Will had a clerk named Mr. Mind, a man every way like his master, and Mansoul was thus brought 'under the lusts' of Will and Intellect. Mr. Mind had in his house some old rent and torn parchments of the law of Shaddai. The Recorder had some more in his study; but to these Will be Will paid no attention, and surrounded himself with officials who were all in Diabolus's interest. He had as deputy one Mr. Affection, 'much debauched in his principles, so that he was called Vile Affection.' Vile Affection married Mr. Mind's daughter, Carnal Lust, by whom he had three sons—Impudent, Black Mouth, and Hate Reproof; and three daughters—Scorn Truth, Slight Good, and Revenge. All traces of Shaddai were now swept away. His image, which had stood in the market-place, was taken down, and an artist called Mr. No Truth was employed to set up the image of Diabolus in place of it. Lord Lustings—'who never savoured good, but evil'—was chosen for the new Lord Mayor. Mr. Forget Good was appointed Recorder. There were new burgesses and aldermen, all with appropriate names, for which Bunyan was never at a loss—Mr. Incredulity, Mr. Haughty, Mr. Swearing, Mr. Hardheart, Mr. Pitiless, Mr. Fury, Mr. No Truth, Mr. Stand

<sup>1</sup> Fears.

to Lies, Mr. Falsepeace, Mr. Drunkenness, Mr. Cheating, Mr. Atheism, and another ; thirteen of them in all. Mr. Incredulity was the eldest, Mr. Atheism the youngest in the company—a shrewd and correct arrangement. Diabolus, on his part, set to work to fortify Mansoul. He built three fortresses—‘The Hold of Defiance’ at Eyegate, that the light might be darkened there; ‘Midnight Hold’ near the old Castle, to keep Mansoul from knowledge of itself; and ‘Sweet Sin Hold’ in the market-place, that there might be no desire of good there. These strongholds being established and garrisoned, Diabolus thought that he had made his conquest secure.

So far the story runs on firmly and clearly. It is vivid, consistent in itself, and held well within the limits of human nature and experience. But, like Milton, Bunyan is now, by the exigencies of the situation, forced upon more perilous ground. He carries us into the presence of Shaddai himself, at the time when the loss of Mansoul was reported in heaven.

The king, his son, his high lords, his chief captains and nobles were all assembled to hear. There was universal grief, in which the king and his son shared or rather seemed to share—for at once the drama of the Fall of mankind becomes no better than a Mystery Play. ‘Shaddai and his son had foreseen it all long before, and had provided for the relief of Mansoul, though they told not everybody thereof—but because they would have a share in condoling of the misery of Mansoul they did, and that at the rate of the highest degree, bewail the losing of Mansoul’—‘thus to show their love and compassion.’

‘Paradise Lost’ was published at the time that Bunyan wrote this passage. If he had not seen it, the coincidences of treatment are singularly curious. It is equally singular,



if he had seen it, that Milton should not here at least have taught him to avoid making the Almighty into a stage actor. The Father and Son consult how 'to do what they had designed before.' They decide that at a certain time, which they preordain, the Son, 'a sweet and comely person,' shall make a journey into the Universe and lay a foundation there for Mansoul's deliverance. Milton offends in the scene less than Bunyan; but Milton cannot persuade us that it is one which should have been represented by either of them. They should have left 'plans of salvation' to eloquent orators in the pulpit.

Though the day of deliverance by the method proposed was as yet far off, the war against Diabolus was to be commenced immediately. The Lord Chief Secretary was ordered to put in writing Shaddai's intentions, and cause them to be published.<sup>1</sup> Mansoul, it was announced, was to be put into a better condition than it was in before Diabolus took it.

The report of the Council in Heaven was brought to Diabolus, who took his measures accordingly, Lord Will be Will standing by him and executing all his directions. Mansoul was forbidden to read Shaddai's proclamation. Diabolus imposed a great oath on the townspeople never to desert him; he believed that if they entered into a covenant of this kind Shaddai could not absolve them from it. They 'swallowed the engagement as if it had been a sprat in the mouth of a whale.' Being now Diabolus's trusty children, he gave them leave 'to do whatever their appetites prompted to do.' They would thus involve themselves in all kinds of wickedness, and Shaddai's son 'being Holy' would be less likely to interest himself for them. When they had in this way put themselves, as Diabolus

<sup>1</sup> The Scriptures.



hoped, beyond reach of mercy, he informed them that Shaddai was raising an army to destroy the town. No quarter would be given, and unless they defended themselves like men they would all be made slaves. Their spirit being roused, he armed them with the shield of unbelief, 'calling into question the truth of the Word.' He gave them a helmet of hope—'hope of doing well at last, whatever lives they might lead'; for a breastplate a heart as hard as iron, 'most necessary for all that hated Shaddai'; and another piece of most excellent armour, 'a drunken and prayerless spirit that scorned to cry for mercy.' Shaddai on his side had also prepared his forces. He would not as yet send his son. The first expedition was to fail and was meant to fail. The object was to try whether Mansoul would return to obedience; and yet Shaddai knew that it would not return to obedience. Bunyan was too ambitious to explain the inexplicable. Fifty thousand warriors were collected, all chosen by Shaddai himself. There were four leaders—Captain Boanerges, Captain Conviction, Captain Judgment, and Captain Execution—the martial saints, with whom Macaulay thinks Bunyan made acquaintance when he served, if serve he did, with Fairfax. The bearings on their banners were three black thunderbolts—the Book of the Law, wide open, with a flame of fire bursting from it; a burning, fiery furnace; and a fruitless tree with an axe at its root. These emblems represent the terrors of Mount Sinai, the covenant of works which was not to prevail.

The captains come to the walls of Mansoul, and summon the town to surrender. Their words 'beat against Eargate, but without force to break it open.' The new officials answer the challenge with defiance. Lord Incredulity knows not by what right Shaddai invades

their country. Lord Will be Will and Mr. Forget Good warn them to be off before they rouse Diabolus. The townspeople ring the bells and dance on the walls. Will be Will double-bars the gates. Bunyan's genius is at its best in scenes of this kind. 'Old Mr. Prejudice, with sixty deaf men,' is appointed to take charge of Eargate. At Eargate, too, are planted two guns, called Highmind, and Heady, 'cast in the earth by Diabolus's head founder, whose name was Mr. Puffup.'

The fighting begins, but the covenant of works makes little progress. Shaddai's captains, when advancing on Mansoul, had fallen in with 'three young fellows of promising appearance' who volunteered to go with them—'Mr. Tradition, Mr. Human Wisdom, and Mr. Man's Invention.' They were allowed to join, and were placed in positions of trust, the captains of the covenant being apparently wanting in discernment. They were taken prisoners in the first skirmish, and immediately changed sides and went over to Diabolus. More battles follow. The roof of the Lord Mayor's house is beaten in. The law is not wholly ineffectual. Six of the Aldermen, the grosser moral sins—Swearing, Stand to Lies, Drunkenness, Cheating, and others—are overcome and killed. Diabolus grows uneasy and loses his sleep. Old Conscience begins to talk again. A party forms in the town in favour of surrender, and Mr. Parley is sent to Eargate to treat for terms. The spiritual sins—False Peace, Unbelief, Haughtiness, Atheism—are still unsubdued and vigorous. The conditions offered are that Incredulity, Forget Good, and Will be Will shall retain their offices; Mansoul shall be continued in all the liberties which it enjoys under Diabolus; and a further touch is added which shows how little Bunyan sympathised with modern notions

of the beauty of self-government. No new law or officer shall have any power in Mansoul without the people's consent.

Boanerges will agree to no conditions with rebels. Incredulity and Will be Will advise the people to stand by their rights, and refuse to submit to 'unlimited' power. The war goes on, and Incredulity is made Diabolus's universal deputy. Conscience and Understanding, the old Recorder and Mayor, raise a mutiny, and there is a fight in the streets. Conscience is knocked down by a Diabolonian called 'Mr. Benumbing.' Understanding had a narrow escape from being shot. On the other hand Mr. Mind, who had come over to the Conservative side, laid about bravely, tumbled old Mr. Prejudice into the dirt, and kicked him where he lay. Even Will be Will seemed to be wavering in his allegiance to Diabolus. 'He smiled and did not seem to take one side more than another.' The rising, however, is put down—Understanding and Conscience are imprisoned, and Mansoul hardens its heart, chiefly 'being in dread of slavery,' and thinking liberty too fine a thing to be surrendered.

Shaddai's four captains find that they can do no more. The covenant of works will not answer. They send home a petition, 'by the hand of that good man Mr. Love to Mansoul,' to beg that some new general may come to lead them. The preordained time has now arrived, and Emmanuel himself is to take the command. He, too, selects his captains—Credence and Good Hope, Charity, and Innocence, and Patience; and the captains have their squires, the counterparts of themselves—Promise and Expectation, Pitiful, Harmless, and Suffer Long. Emmanuel's armour shines like the sun. He has forty-

four battering rams and twenty-two slings—the sixty-six books of the Bible—each made of pure gold. He throws up mounds and trenches, and arms them with his rams, five of the largest being planted on Mount Hearken, over against Eargate. Bunyan was too reverent to imitate the Mystery Plays, and introduce a Mount Calvary with the central sacrifice upon it. The sacrifice is supposed to have been already offered elsewhere. Emmanuel offers mercy to Mansoul, and when it is rejected he threatens judgment and terror. Diabolus, being wiser than man, is made to know that his hour is approaching. He goes in person to Mouthgate to protest and remonstrate. He asks why Emmanuel is come to torment him. Mansoul has disowned Shaddai and sworn allegiance to himself. He begs Emmanuel to leave him to rule his own subjects in peace.

Emmanuel tells him ‘he is a thief and a liar.’ ‘When,’ Emmanuel is made to say, ‘Mansoul sinned by hearkening to thy lie, I put in and became a surety to my Father, body for body, soul for soul, that I would make amends for Mansoul’s transgressions, and my Father did accept thereof. So when the time appointed was come, I gave body for body, soul for soul, life for life, blood for blood, and so redeemed my beloved Mansoul. My Father’s law and justice, that were both concerned in the threatening upon transgression, are both now satisfied, and very well content that Mansoul should be delivered.’

Even against its deliverers, Mansoul was defended by the original condition of its constitution. There was no way into it but through the gates. Diabolus, feeling that Emmanuel still had difficulties before him, withdrew from the wall, and sent a messenger, Mr. Loth to Stoop, to offer alternative terms, to one or other of which he thought



Emmanuel might consent. Emmanuel might be titular sovereign of all Mansoul, if Diabolus might keep the administration of part of it. If this could not be, Diabolus requested to be allowed to reside in Mansoul as a private person. If Emmanuel insisted on his own personal exclusion, at least he expected that his friends and kindred might continue to live there, and that he himself might now and then write them letters, and send them presents and messages, 'in remembrance of the merry times they had enjoyed together.' Finally, he would like to be consulted occasionally when any difficulties arose in Mansoul.

It will be seen that in the end Mansoul was, in fact, left liable to communications from Diabolus very much of this kind. Emmanuel's answer, however, is a peremptory No. Diabolus must take himself away, and no more must be heard of him. Seeing that there was no other resource, Diabolus resolves to fight it out. There is a great battle under the walls, with some losses on Emmanuel's side, even Captain Conviction receiving three wounds in the mouth. The shots from the gold slings mow down whole ranks of Diabolonians. Mr. Love no Good and Mr. Ill Pause are wounded. Old Prejudice and Mr. Anything run away. Lord Will be Will, who still fought for Diabolus, was never so daunted in his life: 'he was hurt in the leg, and limped.'

Diabolus, when the fight was over, came again to the gate with fresh proposals to Emmanuel. 'I,' he said, 'will persuade Mansoul to receive thee for their Lord, and I know that they will do it the sooner when they understand that I am thy deputy. I will show them wherein they have erred, and that transgression stands in the way to life. I will show them the Holy law to which they



must conform, even that which they have broken. I will press upon them the necessity of a reformation according to thy law. At my own cost I will set up and maintain a sufficient ministry, besides lecturers, in Mansoul.' This obviously means the Established Church. Unable to keep mankind directly in his own service, the Devil offers to entangle them in the covenant of works, of which the Church of England was the representative. Emmanuel rebukes him for his guile and deceit. 'I will govern Mansoul,' he says, 'by new laws, new officers, new motives, and new ways. I will pull down the town and build it again, and it shall be as though it had not been, and it shall be the glory of the whole universe.'

A second battle follows. Eargate is beaten in. The Prince's army enters and advances as far as the old Recorder's house, where they knock and demand entrance. 'The old gentleman, not fully knowing their design, had kept his gates shut all the time of the fight. He as yet knew nothing of the great designs of Emmanuel, and could not tell what to think.' The door is violently broken open, and the house is made Emmanuel's headquarters. The townspeople, with Conscience and Understanding at their head, petition that their lives may be spared; but Emmanuel gives no answer, Captain Boanerges and Captain Conviction carrying terror into all hearts. Diabolus, the cause of all the mischief, had retreated into the castle.<sup>1</sup> He came out at last, and surrendered, and in dramatic fitness he clearly ought now to have been made away with in a complete manner. Unfortunately, this could not be done. He was stripped of his armour, bound to Emmanuel's chariot wheels, and thus turned out of Mansoul 'into parched places in a salt land, where

<sup>1</sup> The heart.

he might seek rest and find none.' The salt land proved as insecure a prison for this embarrassing being as the pit where he was to have abode for ever.

Meanwhile, Mansoul being brought upon its knees, the inhabitants were summoned into the castle yard, when Conscience, Understanding, and Will be Will were committed to ward. They and the rest again prayed for mercy, but again without effect. Emmanuel was silent. They drew another petition, and asked Captain Conviction to present it for them. Captain Conviction declined to be an advocate for rebels, and advised them to send it by one of themselves, with a rope about his neck. Mr. Desires Awake went with it. The Prince took it from his hands, and wept as Desires Awake gave it in. Emmanuel bade him go his way till the request could be considered. The unhappy criminals knew not how to take the answer. Mr. Understanding thought it promised well. Conscience and Will be Will, borne down by shame for their sins, looked for nothing but immediate death. They tried again. They threw themselves on Emmanuel's mercy. They drew up a confession of their horrible iniquities. This, at least, they wished to offer to him whether he would pity them or not. For a messenger some of them thought of choosing one Old Good Deed. Conscience, however, said that would never do. Emmanuel would answer, 'Is Old Good Deed yet alive in Mansoul? Then let Old Good Deed save it.' Desires Awake went again with the rope on his neck, as Captain Conviction recommended. Mr. Wet Eyes went with him, wringing his hands.

Emmanuel still held out no comfort; he promised merely that in the camp the next morning he would give such an answer as should be to his glory. Nothing but

the worst was now looked for. Mansoul passed the night in sackcloth and ashes. When day broke, the prisoners dressed themselves in mourning, and were carried to the camp in chains, with ropes on their necks, beating their breasts. Prostrate before Emmanuel's throne, they repeated their confession. They acknowledged that death and the bottomless pit would be no more than a just retribution for their crimes. As they excused nothing and promised nothing, Emmanuel at once delivered them their pardons sealed with seven seals. He took off their ropes and mourning, clothed them in shining garments, and gave them chains and jewels.

Lord Will be Will 'swooned outright.' When he recovered, 'the Prince' embraced and kissed him. The bells in Mansoul were set ringing. Bonfires blazed. Emmanuel reviewed his army; and Mansoul, ravished at the sight, prayed him to remain and be their King for ever. He entered the city again in triumph, the people strewing boughs and flowers before him. The streets and squares were rebuilt on a new model. Lord Will be Will, now regenerate, resumed the charge of the gates. The old Lord Mayor was reinstated. Mr. Knowledge was made Recorder, 'not out of contempt for old Conscience, who was by-and-bye to have another employment.' Diabolus's image was taken down and broken to pieces, and the inhabitants of Mansoul were so happy that they sang of Emmanuel in their sleep.

Justice, however, remained to be done on the hardened and impenitent.

There were 'perhaps necessities in the nature of things,' as Bishop Butler says, and an example could not be made of the principal offender. But his servants and old officials were lurking in the lanes and alleys. They

were apprehended, thrown into gaol, and brought to formal trial. Here we have Bunyan at his best. The scene in the court rises to the level of the famous trial of Faithful in Vanity Fair. The prisoners were Diabolus's Aldermen, Mr. Atheism, Mr. Incredulity, Mr. Lustings, Mr. Forget Good, Mr. Hardheart, Mr. Falsepeace, and the rest. The proceedings were precisely what Bunyan must have witnessed at a common English Assizes. The Judges were the new Recorder and the new Mayor. Mr. Do-right was Town Clerk. A jury was empanelled in the usual way. Mr. Knowall, Mr. Telltrue, and Mr. Hatelies were the principal witnesses.

Atheism was first brought to the bar, being charged 'with having pertinaciously and doltingly taught that there was no God.' He pleaded Not Guilty. Mr. Knowall was placed in the witness-box and sworn.

'My Lord,' he said, 'I know the prisoner at the bar. I and he were once in Villains Lane together, and he at that time did briskly talk of diverse opinions. And then and there I heard him say that for his part he did believe that there was no God. "But," said he, "I can profess one and be religious too, if the company I am in and the circumstances of other things," said he, "shall put me upon it."'

Telltrue and Hatelies were next called.

*Telltrue.* My Lord, I was formerly a great companion of the prisoner's, for the which I now repent me; and I have often heard him say, and with very great stomach-fulness, that he believed there was neither God, Angel, nor Spirit.

*Town Clerk.* Where did you hear him say so?

*Telltrue.* In Blackmouth Lane and in Blasphemers Row, and in many other places besides.

*Town Clerk.* Have you much knowledge of him?

*Telltrue.* I know him to be a Diabolonian, the son of a Diabolonian, and a horrible man to deny a Deity. His father's



name was Never be Good, and he had more children than this Atheism.

*Town Clerk.* Mr. Hatelies. Look upon the prisoner at the bar. Do you know him?

*Hatelies.* My Lord, this Atheism is one of the vilest wretches that ever I came near or had to do with in my life. I have heard him say that there is no God. I have heard him say that there is no world to come, no sin, nor punishment hereafter; and, moreover, I have heard him say that it was as good to go to a bad-house as to go to hear a sermon.

*Town Clerk.* Where did you hear him say these things?

*Hatelies.* In Drunkards Row, just at Rascal Lane's End, at a house in which Mr. Impiety lived.

The next prisoner was Mr. Lustings, who said that he was of high birth and 'used to pleasures and pastimes of greatness.' He had always been allowed to follow his own inclinations, and it seemed strange to him that he should be called in question for things which not only he but every man secretly or openly approved.

When the evidence had been heard against him he admitted frankly its general correctness.

'I,' he said, 'was ever of opinion that the happiest life that a man could live on earth was to keep himself back from nothing that he desired; nor have I been false at any time to this opinion of mine, but have lived in the love of my notions all my days. Nor was I ever so churlish, having found such sweetness in them myself, as to keep the commendation of them from others.'

Then came Mr. Incredulity. He was charged with having encouraged the town of Mansoul to resist Shaddai. Incredulity too had the courage of his opinions.

'I know not Shaddai,' he said. 'I love my old Prince. I thought it my duty to be true to my trust, and to do what I could to possess the minds of the men of Mansoul to do their utmost to resist strangers and foreigners. and



with might to fight against them. Nor have I nor shall I change my opinion for fear of trouble, though you at present are possessed of place and power.'

Forget Good pleaded age and craziness. He was the son of a Diabolonian called Love Naught. He had uttered blasphemous speeches in Allbase Lane, next door to the sign of 'Conscience Seared with a Hot Iron;' also in Flesh Lane, right opposite the Church; also in Nauseous Street; also at the sign of the 'Reprobate,' next door to the 'Descent into the Pit.'

Falsepeace insisted that he was wrongly named in the indictment. His real name was Peace, and he had always laboured for peace. When war broke out between Shaddai and Diabolus, he had endeavoured to reconcile them, &c. Evidence was given that Falsepeace was his right designation. His father's name was Flatter. His mother, before she married Flatter, was called Mrs. Sootheup. When her child was born she always spoke of him as Falsepeace. She would call him twenty times a day, my little Falsepeace, my pretty Falsepeace, my sweet rogue Falsepeace! &c.

The court rejected his plea. He was told 'that he had wickedly maintained the town of Mansoul in rebellion against its king, in a false, lying, and damnable peace, contrary to the law of Shaddai. Peace that was not a companion of truth and holiness, was an accursed and treacherous peace, and was grounded on a lie.'

No Truth had assisted with his own hands in pulling down the image of Shaddai. He had set up the horned image of the beast Diabolus at the same place, and had torn and consumed all that remained of the laws of the king.

Pitiless said his name was not Pitiless, but Cheer

Up. He disliked to see Mansoul inclined to melancholy, and that was all his offence. Pitiless, however, was proved to be the name of him. It was a habit of the Diabolonians to assume counterfeit appellations. Covetousness called himself Good Husbandry; Pride called himself Handsome; and so on.

Mr. Haughty's figure is admirably drawn in a few lines. Mr. Haughty, when arraigned, declared 'that he had carried himself bravely, not considering who was his foe, or what was the cause in which he was engaged. It was enough for him if he fought like a man and came off victorious.'

The jury, it seems, made no distinctions between opinions and acts. They did not hold that there was any divine right in man to think what he pleased, and to say what he thought. Bunyan had suffered as a martyr; but it was as a martyr for truth, not for general licence. The genuine Protestants never denied that it was right to prohibit men from teaching lies, and to punish them if they disobeyed. The persecution of which they complained was the persecution of the honest man by the knave.

All the prisoners were found guilty by a unanimous verdict. Even Mr. Moderate, who was one of the jury, thought a man must be wilfully blind who wished to spare them. They were sentenced to be executed the next day. Incredulity contrived to escape in the night. Search was made for him, but he was not to be found in Mansoul. He had fled beyond the walls, and had joined Diabolus near Hell Gate. The rest, we are told, were crucified—crucified by the hands of the men of Mansoul themselves. They fought and struggled at the place of execution so violently that Shaddai's secretary was obliged

to send assistance. But justice was done at last, and all the Diabolonians, except Incredulity, were thus made an end of.

They were made an end of for a time only. Mansoul, by faith in Christ, and by the help of the Holy Spirit, had crucified all manner of sin in its members. It was faith that had now the victory. Unbelief had, unfortunately, escaped. It had left Mansoul for the time, and had gone to its master the Devil. But unbelief, being intellectual, had not been crucified with the sins of the flesh, and thus could come back, and undo the work which faith had accomplished. I do not know how far this view approves itself to the more curious theologians. Unbelief itself is said to be a product of the will; but an allegory must not be cross-questioned too minutely.

The cornucopia of spiritual blessings was now opened on Mansoul. All offences were fully and completely forgiven. A Holy Law and Testament was bestowed on the people for their comfort and consolation, with a portion of the grace which dwelt in the hearts of Shaddai and Emmanuel themselves. They were to be allowed free access to Emmanuel's palace at all seasons, he himself undertaking to hear them and redress their grievances, and they were empowered and enjoined to destroy all Diabolonians who might be found at any time within their precincts.

These grants were embodied in a charter which was set up in gold letters on the castle door. Two ministers were appointed to carry on the government—one from Shaddai's court; the other a native of Mansoul. The first was Shaddai's chief secretary, the Holy Spirit. He, if they were obedient and well-conducted, would be 'ten times better to them than the whole world.' But they

were cautioned to be careful of their behaviour, for if they grieved him he would turn against them, and the worst might then be looked for. The second minister was the old Recorder, Mr. Conscience, for whom, as was said, a new office had been provided. The address of Emmanuel to Conscience in handing his commission to him contains the essence of Bunyan's creed.

'Thou must confine thyself to the teaching of moral virtues, to civil and natural duties. But thou must not attempt to presume to be a revealer of those high and supernatural mysteries that are kept close in the bosom of Shaddai, my father. For those things knows no man ; nor can any reveal them but my father's secretary only. . . . In all high and supernatural things, thou must go to him for information and knowledge. Wherefore keep low and be humble ; and remember that the Diabolonians that kept not their first charge, but left their own standing, are now made prisoners in the pit. Be therefore content with thy station. I have made thee my father's vicegerent on earth in the things of which I have made mention before. Take thou power to teach them to Mansoul ; yea, to impose them with whips and chastisements if they shall not willingly hearken to do thy commandments. . . . And one thing more to my beloved Mr. Recorder, and to all the town of Mansoul. You must not dwell in nor stay upon anything of that which he hath in commission to teach you, as to your trust and expectation of the next world. Of the next world, I say ; for I purpose to give another to Mansoul when this is worn out. But for that you must wholly and solely have recourse to and make stay upon the doctrine of your teacher of the first order. Yea, Mr. Recorder himself must not look for life from that which he himself revealeth. His dependence



for that must be founded in the doctrine of the other preacher. Let Mr. Recorder also take heed that he receive not any doctrine or points of doctrine that are not communicated to him by his superior teacher, nor yet within the precincts of his own formal knowledge.'

Here, as a work of art, the 'Holy War' should have its natural end. Mansoul had been created pure and happy. The Devil plotted against it, took it, defiled it. The Lord of the town came to the rescue, drove the Devil out, executed his officers and destroyed his works. Mansoul, according to Emmanuel's promise, was put into a better condition than that in which it was originally placed. New laws were drawn for it. New ministers were appointed to execute them. Vice had been destroyed. Unbelief had been driven away. The future lay serene and bright before it; all trials and dangers being safely passed. Thus we have all the parts of a complete drama—the fair beginning, the perils, the struggles, and the final victory of good. At this point, for purposes of art, the curtain ought to fall.

For purposes of art—not, however, for purposes of truth. For the drama of Mansoul was still incomplete, and will remain incomplete till man puts on another nature or ceases altogether to be. Christianity might place him in a new relation to his Maker, and, according to Bunyan, might expel the Devil out of his heart. But for practical purposes, as Mansoul too well knows, the Devil is still in possession. At intervals—as in the first centuries of the Christian era, for a period in the middle ages, and again in Protestant countries for another period at the Reformation—mankind made noble efforts to drive him out, and make the law of God into reality. But he comes back again, and the world is again as it was. The



vices again flourish which had been nailed to the Cross. The statesman finds it as little possible as ever to take moral right and justice for his rule in politics. The Evangelical preacher continues to confess and deplore the desperate wickedness of the human heart. The Devil had been deposed, but his faithful subjects have restored him to his throne. The stone of Sisyphus has been brought to the brow of the hill only to rebound again to the bottom. The old battle has to be fought a second time, and, for all we can see, no closing victory will ever be in 'this country of Universe.' Bunyan knew this but too well. He tries to conceal it from himself by treating Mansoul alternately as the soul of a single individual from which the Devil may be so expelled as never dangerously to come back, or as the collective souls of the Christian world. But, let him mean which of the two he will, the overpowering fact remains that, from the point of view of his own theology, the great majority of mankind are the Devil's servants through life, and are made over to him everlastingly when their lives are over; while the human race itself continues to follow its idle amusements and its sinful pleasures as if no Emmanuel had ever come from heaven to rescue it. Thus the situation is incomplete, and the artistic treatment necessarily unsatisfactory—nay in a sense even worse than unsatisfactory, for the attention of the reader, being reawakened by the fresh and lively treatment of the subject, refuses to be satisfied with conventional explanatory commonplaces. His mind is puzzled; his faith wavers in its dependence upon a Being who can permit His work to be spoilt, His power defied, His victories even, when won, made useless.

Thus we take up the continuation of the 'Holy War' with a certain weariness and expectation of disappoint-

ment. The delivery of Mansoul has not been finished after all, and, for all that we can see, the struggle between Shaddai and Diabolus may go on to eternity. Emmanuel, before he withdraws his presence, warns the inhabitants that many Diabolonians are still lurking about the outside walls of the town.<sup>1</sup> The names are those in St. Paul's list—Fornication, Adultery, Murder, Anger, Lasciviousness, Deceit, Evil Eye, Drunkenness, Revelling, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Variance, Emulation, Wrath, Strife, Sedition, Heresy. If all these were still abroad, not much had been gained by the crucifixion of the Aldermen. For the time, it was true, they did not show themselves openly. Mansoul after the conquest was clothed in white linen, and was in a state of peace and glory. But the linen was speedily soiled again. Mr. Carnal Security became a great person in Mansoul. The Chief Secretary's functions fell early into abeyance. He discovered the Recorder and Lord Will be Will at dinner in Mr. Carnal Security's parlour, and ceased to communicate with them. Mr. Godly Fear sounded an alarm, and Mr. Carnal Security's house was burnt by the mob; but Mansoul's backslidings grew worse. It had its fits of repentance, and petitioned Emmanuel, but the messenger could have no admittance. The Lusts of the Flesh came out of their dens. They held a meeting in the room of Mr. Mischief, and wrote to invite Diabolus to return. Mr. Profane carried their letter to Hell Gate. Cerberus opened it, and a cry of joy ran through the prison. Beelzebub, Lucifer, Apollyon, and the rest of the devils came crowding to hear the news. Deadman's bell was rung. Diabolus addressed the assembly, putting them in hopes of recovering their prize. 'Nor need you fear, he said, that if ever we get Mansoul again, we after that

<sup>1</sup> The Flesh.

shall be cast out any more. It is the law of that Prince that now they own, that if we get them a second time they shall be ours for ever.' He returned a warm answer to his friend, 'which was subscribed as given at the Pit's mouth, by the joint consent of all the Princes of Darkness, by me, Diabolus.' The plan was to corrupt Mansoul's morals, and three devils of rank set off disguised to take service in the town, and make their way into the households of Mr. Mind, Mr. Godly Fear, and Lord Will be Will. Godly Fear discovered his mistake and turned the devil out. The other two established themselves successfully, and Mr. Profane was soon at Hell Gate again to report progress. Cerberus welcomed him with a 'St. Mary, I am glad to see thee.' Another council was held in Pandemonium, and Diabolus was impatient to show himself again on the scene. Apollyon advised him not to be in a hurry. 'Let our friends,' he said, 'draw Mansoul more and more into sin—there is nothing like sin to devour Mansoul;' but Diabolus would not wait for so slow a process, and raised an army of Doubters 'from the land of Doubting on the confines of Hell Gate Hill.' 'Doubt,' Bunyan always admitted, had been his own most dangerous enemy.

Happily the townspeople became aware of the peril which threatened them. Mr. Prywell, a great lover of Mansoul, overheard some Diabolonians talking about it at a place called Vile Hill. He carried his information to the Lord Mayor; the Recorder rang the Alarm Bell; Mansoul flew to penitence, held a day of fasting and humiliation, and prayed to Shaddai. The Diabolonians were hunted out, and all that could be found were killed. So far as haste and alarm would permit, Mansoul mended its ways. But on came the Doubting

army, led by Incredulity, who had escaped crucifixion—‘none was truer to Diabolus than he’—on they came under their several captains, Vocation Doubters, Grace Doubters, Salvation Doubters, &c.—figures now gone to shadow ; then the deadliest foes of every English Puritan soul. Mansoul appealed passionately to the Chief Secretary ; but the Chief Secretary ‘had been grieved,’ and would have nothing to say to it. The town legions went out to meet the invaders with good words, Prayer, and singing of Psalms. The Doubters replied with ‘horrible objections,’ which were frightfully effective. Lord Reason was wounded in the head and the Lord Mayor in the eye ; Mr. Mind received a shot in the stomach, and Conscience was hit near the heart ; but the wounds were not mortal. Mansoul had the best of it in the first engagement. Terror was followed by boasting and self-confidence ; a night sally was attempted—night being the time when the Doubters were strongest. The sally failed, and the men of Mansoul were turned to rout. Diabolus’s army attacked Eargate, stormed the walls, forced their way into the town, and captured the whole of it except the castle. Then ‘Mansoul became a den of dragons, an emblem of Hell, a place of total darkness.’ ‘Mr. Conscience’s wounds so festered that he could have no rest day or night.’ ‘Now a man might have walked for days together in Mansoul, and scarce have seen one in the town that looked like a religious man. Oh, the fearful state of Mansoul now !’ ‘Now every corner swarmed with outlandish Doubters ; Red Coats and Black Coats walked the town by clusters, and filled the houses with hideous noises, lying stories, and blasphemous language against Shaddai and his Son.’

This is evidently meant for fashionable London in the



time of Charles II. Bunyan was loyal to the King. He was no believer in moral regeneration through political revolution. But none the less he could see what was under his eyes, and he knew what to think of it.

All was not lost, for the castle still held out. The only hope was in Emmanuel, and the garrison proposed to petition again in spite of the ill reception of their first messengers. Godly Fear reminded them that no petition would be received which was not signed by the Lord Secretary, and that the Lord Secretary would sign nothing which he had not himself drawn up. The Lord Secretary, when appealed to in the proper manner, no longer refused his assistance. Captain Credence flew up to Shaddai's court with the simple words that Mansoul renounced all trust in its own strength and relied upon its Saviour. This time its prayer would be heard.

The devils meanwhile, triumphant though they were, discovered that they could have no permanent victory unless they could reduce the castle. 'Doubters at a distance,' Beelzebub said, 'are but like objections repelled by arguments. Can we but get them into the hold, and make them possessors of that, the day will be our own.' The object was, therefore, to corrupt Mansoul at the heart.

Then follows a very curious passage. Bunyan had still his eye on England, and had discerned the quarter from which her real danger would approach. Mansoul, the Devil perceived, 'was a market town, much given to commerce.' 'It would be possible to dispose of some of the Devil's wares there.' The people would be filled full, and made rich, and would forget Emmanuel. 'Mansoul,' they said, 'shall be so cumbered with abundance, that they shall be forced to make their castle a warehouse.'



Wealth once made the first object of existence, 'Diabolus's gang will have easy entrance, and the castle will be our own.'

Political economy was still sleeping in the womb of futurity. Diabolus was unable to hasten its birth, and an experiment which Bunyan thought would certainly have succeeded was not to be tried. The *Deus ex Machina* appeared with its flaming sword. The Doubting army was cut to pieces, and Mansoul was saved. Again, however, the work was imperfectly done. Diabolus, like the bad genius in the fairy tale, survived for fresh mischief. Diabolus flew off again to Hell Gate, and was soon at the head of a new host; part composed of fugitive Doubters whom he rallied, and part of a new set of enemies called *Bloodmen*, by whom we are to understand persecutors, 'a people from a land that lay under the Dog Star.' 'Captain Pope' was chief of the Bloodmen. His escutcheon 'was the stake, the flame, and good men in it.' The Bloodmen had done Diabolus wonderful service in time past. 'Once they had forced Emmanuel out of the Kingdom of the Universe, and why, thought he, might they not do it again?'

Emmanuel did not this time go in person to the encounter. It was enough to send his captains. The Doubters fled at the first onset. 'The Bloodmen, when they saw that no Emmanuel was in the field, concluded that no Emmanuel was in Mansoul. Wherefore, they, looking upon what the captains did to be, as they called it, a fruit of the extravagancy of their wild and foolish fancies, rather despised them than feared them.' 'They proved, nevertheless, chicken-hearted, when they saw themselves matched and equalled.' The chiefs were taken prisoners, and brought to trial like Atheism and his

companions, and so, with an address from the Prince, the story comes to a close.

Thus at last the 'Holy War' ends or seems to end. It is as if Bunyan had wished to show that though the converted Christian was still liable to the assaults of Satan, and even to be beaten down and overcome by him, his state was never afterwards so desperate as it had been before the redemption, and that he had assistance ready at hand to save him when near extremity. But the reader whose desire it is that good shall triumph and evil be put to shame and overthrown remains but partially satisfied; and the last conflict and its issues leave Mansoul still subject to fresh attacks. Diabolus was still at large. Carnal Sense broke prison and continued to lurk in the town. Unbelief 'was a nimble Jack: him they could never lay hold of, though they attempted to do it often.' Unbelief remained in Mansoul till the time that Mansoul ceased to dwell in the country of the Universe; and where Unbelief was Diabolus would not be without a friend to open the gates to him. Bunyan says, indeed, that 'he was stoned as often as he showed himself in the streets.' He shows himself in the streets much at his ease in these days of ours after two more centuries.

Here lies the real weakness of the 'Holy War.' It may be looked at either as the war in the soul of each sinner that is saved, or as the war for the deliverance of humanity. Under the first aspect it leaves out of sight the large majority of mankind who are not supposed to be saved, and out of whom, therefore, Diabolus is not driven at all. Under the other aspect the struggle is still unfinished; the last act of the drama has still to be played, and we know not what the conclusion is to be.

To attempt to represent it, therefore, as a work of art, with a beginning, a middle, and an end, is necessarily a failure. The mysteries and contradictions which the Christian revelation leaves unsolved are made tolerable to us by Hope. We are prepared to find in religion many things which we cannot understand; and difficulties do not perplex us so long as they remain in a form to which we are accustomed. To emphasise the problem by offering it to us in an allegory, of which we are presumed to possess a key, serves only to revive Man Friday's question, or the old dilemma which neither intellect nor imagination has ever dealt with successfully. '*Deus aut non vult tollere mala, aut nequit. Si non vult non est bonus. Si nequit non est omnipotens.*' It is wiser to confess with Butler that 'there may be necessities in the nature of things which we are not acquainted with.'

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.

IF the 'Holy War' is an unfit subject for allegorical treatment, the 'Pilgrim's Progress' is no less perfectly adapted for it. The 'Holy War' is a representation of the struggle of human nature with evil, and the struggle is left undecided. The 'Pilgrim's Progress' is a representation of the efforts of a single soul after holiness, which has its natural termination when the soul quits its mortal home and crosses the dark river. Each one of us has his own life battle to fight out, his own sorrows and trials, his own failures or successes, and his own end. He wins the game, or he loses it. The account is wound up, and the curtain falls upon him. Here Bunyan had a material as excellent in itself as it was exactly suited to his peculiar genius; and his treatment of the subject from his own point of view—that of English Protestant Christianity—is unequalled and never will be equalled. I may say never, for in this world of change the point of view alters fast, and never continues in one stay. As we are swept along the stream of time, lights and shadows shift their places, mountain plateaus turn to sharp peaks, mountain ranges dissolve into vapour. The river which has been gliding deep and slow along the plain, leaps suddenly over a precipice and plunges foaming down a

sunless gorge. In the midst of changing circumstances the central question remains the same—What am I? what is this world in which I appear and disappear like a bubble? who made me? and what am I to do? Some answer or other the mind of man demands and insists on receiving. Theologian or poet offers at long intervals explanations which are accepted as credible for a time. They wear out, and another follows, and then another. Bunyan's answer has served average English men and women for two hundred years, but no human being with Bunyan's intellect and Bunyan's sincerity can again use similar language; and the 'Pilgrim's Progress' is and will remain unique of its kind—an imperishable monument of the form in which the problem presented itself to a person of singular truthfulness, simplicity, and piety, who after many struggles accepted the Puritan creed as the adequate solution of it. It was composed exactly at the time when it was possible for such a book to come into being; the close of the period when the Puritan formula was a real belief, and was about to change from a living principle into an intellectual opinion. So long as a religion is fully alive, men do not talk about it or make allegories about it. They assume its truth as out of reach of question, and they simply obey its precepts as they obey the law of the land. It becomes a subject of art and discourse only when men are unconsciously ceasing to believe, and therefore the more vehemently think that they believe, and repudiate with indignation the suggestion that doubt has found its way into them. After this religion no longer governs their lives. It governs only the language in which they express themselves, and they preserve it eagerly, in the shape of elaborate observances or in the agreeable forms of art and literature.



The 'Pilgrim's Progress' was written before the 'Holy War,' while Bunyan was still in prison at Bedford, and was but half conscious of the gifts which he possessed. It was written for his own entertainment, and therefore without the thought—so fatal in its effects and so hard to be resisted—of what the world would say about it. It was written in compulsory quiet, when he was comparatively unexcited by the effort of perpetual preaching, and the shapes of things could present themselves to him as they really were, undistorted by theological narrowness. It is the same story which he has told of himself in 'Grace Abounding,' thrown out into an objective form.

He tells us himself, in a metrical introduction, the circumstances under which it was composed :—

When at the first I took my pen in hand,  
Thus for to write, I did not understand  
That I at all should make a little book  
In such a mode. Nay, I had undertook  
To make another, which when almost done,  
Before I was aware I this begun.

And thus it was.—I writing of the way  
And race of saints in this our Gospel day,  
Fell suddenly into an Allegory  
About the journey and the way to glory  
In more than twenty things which I set down.  
This done, I twenty more had in my crown,  
And these again began to multiply,  
Like sparks that from the coals of fire do fly.  
Nay then, thought I, if that you breed so fast  
I'll put you by yourselves, lest you at last  
Should prove *ad Infinitum*, and eat out  
The book that I already am about.

Well, so I did ; but yet I did not think  
To show to all the world my pen and ink

In such a mode. I only thought to make,  
I knew not what. Nor did I undertake  
Merely to please my neighbours ; no, not I.  
I did it mine own self to gratify.

Neither did I but vacant seasons spend  
In this my scribble ; nor did I intend  
But to divert myself in doing this  
From worser thoughts which make me do amiss.  
Thus I set pen to paper with delight,  
And quickly had my thoughts in black and white ;  
For having now my method by the end,  
Still as I pulled it came ; and so I penned  
It down : until at last it came to be  
For length and breadth the bigness which you see.

Well, when I had thus put my ends together,  
I showed them others, that I might see whether  
They would condemn them or them justify.  
And some said, Let them live ; some, Let them die ;  
Some said, John, print it ; others said, Not so ;  
Some said it might do good ; others said, No.

Now was I in a strait, and did not see  
Which was the best thing to be done by me.  
At last I thought, since you are thus divided,  
I print it will ; and so the case decided.

The difference of opinion among Bunyan's friends is easily explicable. The allegoric representation of religion to men profoundly convinced of the truth of it might naturally seem light and fantastic, and the breadth of the conception could not please the narrow sectarians who knew no salvation beyond the lines of their peculiar formulas. The Pilgrim though in a Puritan dress is a genuine man. His experience is so truly human experience, that Christians of every persuasion can identify themselves with him ; and even those who regard Christianity itself as but a natural outgrowth of the

conscience and intellect, and yet desire to live nobly and make the best of themselves, can recognise familiar foot-prints in every step of Christian's journey. Thus the 'Pilgrim's Progress' is a book, which, when once read, can never be forgotten. We too, every one of us, are pilgrims on the same road, and images and illustrations come back upon us from so faithful an itinerary, as we encounter similar trials, and learn for ourselves the accuracy with which Bunyan has described them. There is no occasion to follow a story minutely which memory can so universally supply. I need pause only at a few spots which are too charming to pass by.

How picturesque and vivid are the opening lines :

'As I walked through the wilderness of this world I lighted on a certain place where there was a den,<sup>1</sup> and I laid me down in that place to sleep, and as I slept I dreamed a dream. I dreamed, and behold I saw a man, a man clothed in rags, standing with his face from his own home with a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back.'

The man is Bunyan himself as we see him in 'Grace Abounding.' His sins are the burden upon his back. He reads his book and weeps and trembles. He speaks of his fears to his friends and kindred. They think 'some frenzy distemper has got into his head.' He meets a man in the fields whose name is Evangelist. Evangelist tells him to flee from the City of Destruction. He shows him the way by which he must go, and points to the far-off light which will guide him to the wicket-gate. He sets off, and his neighbours of course think him mad. The world always thinks men mad who turn their backs upon it. Obstinate and Pliable (how well we know them

<sup>1</sup> The Bedford Prison.

both !) follow to persuade him to return. Obstinate talks practical common sense to him, and as it has no effect, gives him up as a fantastical fellow. Pliable thinks that there may be something in what he says, and offers to go with him.

Before they can reach the wicket-gate, they fall into a 'miry slough.' Who does not know the miry slough too? When a man begins for the first time to think seriously about himself, the first thing that rises before him is a consciousness of his miserable past life. Amendment seems to be desperate. He thinks it is too late to change for any useful purpose, and he sinks into despondency.

Pliable finding the road disagreeable has soon had enough of it. He scrambles out of the slough 'on the side which was nearest to his own house' and goes home. Christian struggling manfully is lifted out 'by a man whose name was Help,' and goes on upon his journey, but the burden on his back weighs him down. He falls in with Mr. Worldly Wiseman who lives in the town of Carnal Policy. Mr. Worldly Wiseman, who looks like a gentleman, advises him not to think about his sins. If he has done wrong he must alter his life and do better for the future. He directs him to a village called Morality, where he will find a gentleman well known in those parts, who will take his burden off—Mr. Legality. Either Mr. Legality will do it himself, or it can be done equally well by his pretty young son, Mr. Civility.

The way to a better life does not lie in a change of outward action, but in a changed heart. Legality soon passes into civility, according to the saying that vice loses half its evil when it loses its grossness. Bunyan would have said that the poison was the more deadly from being

concealed. Christian after a near escape is set straight again. He is admitted into the wicket-gate and is directed how he is to go forward. He asks if he may not lose his way. He is answered Yes, 'There are many ways (that) butt down on this and they are crooked and wide. But thus thou mayest know the right from the wrong, that only being straight and narrow.'

Good people often suppose that when a man is once 'converted,' as they call it, and has entered on a religious life, he will find everything made easy. He has turned to Christ, and in Christ he will find rest and pleasantness. The path of duty is unfortunately not strewn with flowers at all. The primrose road leads to the other place. As on all other journeys, to persevere is the difficulty. The pilgrim's feet grow sorer the longer he walks. His lower nature follows him like a shadow watching opportunities to trip him up, and ever appearing in some new disguise. In the way of comfort he is allowed only certain resting places, quiet intervals of peace when temptation is absent, and the mind can gather strength and encouragement from a sense of the progress which it has made.

The first of these resting places at which Christian arrives is the 'Interpreter's House.' This means, I conceive, that he arrives at a right understanding of the objects of human desire as they really are. He learns to distinguish there between passion and patience, passion which demands immediate gratification, and patience which can wait and hope. He sees the action of grace on the heart, and sees the Devil labouring to put it out. He sees the man in the iron cage who was once a flourishing professor, but had been tempted away by pleasure and had sinned against light. He hears a dream too—one of



Bunyan's own early dreams, but related as by another person. The Pilgrim himself was beyond the reach of such uneasy visions. But it shows how profoundly the terrible side of Christianity had seized on Bunyan's imagination and how little he was able to forget it.

‘This night as I was in my sleep I dreamed, and behold the heavens grew exceeding black : also it thundered and lightened in most fearful wise, that it put me into an agony ; so I looked up in my dream and saw the clouds rack at an unusual rate, upon which I heard a great sound of a trumpet, and saw also a man sit upon a cloud attended with the thousands of heaven. They were all in a flaming fire, and the heaven also was in a burning flame. I heard then a voice, saying, Arise ye dead and come to judgment ; and with that the rocks rent, the graves opened, and the dead that were therein came forth. Some of them were exceeding glad and looked upward, some sought to hide themselves under the mountains. Then I saw the man that sate upon the cloud open the book and bid the world draw near. Yet there was, by reason of a fierce flame that issued out and came from before him, a convenient distance betwixt him and them, as betwixt the judge and the prisoners at the bar. I heard it also proclaimed to them that attended on the man that sate on the cloud, Gather together the tares, the chaff, and the stubble, and cast them into the burning lake. And with that the bottomless pit opened just whereabouts I stood, out of the mouth of which there came in an abundant manner smoke and coals of fire with hideous noises. It was also said to the same persons, Gather the wheat into my garner. And with that I saw many caught up and carried away into the clouds, but I was left behind. I also sought to hide

myself, but I could not, for the man that sate upon the cloud still kept his eye upon me. My sins also came into my mind, and my conscience did accuse me on every side. I thought the day of judgment was come and I was not ready for it.'

The resting time comes to an end. The Pilgrim gathers himself together, and proceeds upon his way. He is not to be burdened for ever with the sense of his sins. It fell from off his back at the sight of the cross. Three shining ones appear and tell him that his sins are forgiven; they take off his rags and provide him with a new suit.

He now encounters fellow-travellers; and the seriousness of the story is relieved by adventures and humorous conversations. At the bottom of a hill he finds three gentlemen asleep, 'a little out of the way.' These were Simple, Sloth, and Presumption. He tries to rouse them, but does not succeed. Presently two others are seen tumbling over the wall into the Narrow Way. They are come from the land of Vain Glory, and are called Formalist and Hypocrisy. Like the Pilgrim, they are bound for Mount Zion; but the wicket-gate was 'too far about,' and they had come by a short cut. 'They had custom for it a thousand years and more; and custom being of so long standing would be admitted legal by any impartial judge.' Whether right or wrong they insist that they are in the way, and no more is to be said. But they are soon out of it again. The hill is the hill Difficulty, and the road parts into three. Two go round the bottom, as modern engineers would make them. The other rises straight over the top. Formalist and Hypocrisy choose the easy ways, and are heard of no more. Pilgrim climbs up, and after various accidents comes to

the second resting-place, the Palace Beautiful, built by the Lord of the Hill to entertain strangers in. The recollections of Sir Bevis of Southampton furnished Bunyan with his framework. Lions guard the court. Fair ladies entertain him as if he had been a knight-errant in quest of the Holy Grail. The ladies, of course, are all that they ought to be: the Christian graces—Discretion, Prudence, Piety, and Charity. He tells them his history. They ask him if he has brought none of his old belongings with him. He answers yes; but greatly against his will: his inward and carnal cogitations, with which his countrymen, as well as himself, were so much delighted. Only in golden hours they seemed to leave him. Who cannot recognise the truth of this? Who has not groaned over the follies and idiotcies that cling to us like the doggerel verses that hang about our memories? The room in which he sleeps is called Peace. In the morning he is shown the curiosities, chiefly Scripture relics, in the palace. He is taken to the roof, from which he sees far off the outlines of the Delectable Mountains. Next, the ladies carry him to the armoury, and equip him for the dangers which lie next before him. He is to go down into the Valley of Humiliation, and pass thence through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

Bunyan here shows the finest insight. To some pilgrims the Valley of Humiliation was the pleasantest part of the journey. Mr. Feeblemind, in the second part of the story, was happier there than anywhere. But Christian is Bunyan himself; and Bunyan had a stiff self-willed nature, and had found his spirit the most stubborn part of him. Down here he encounters Apollyon himself, 'straddling quite over the whole breadth of the way'—a more effective devil than the Diabolus of the 'Holy

War.' He fights him for half-a-day, is sorely wounded in head, hand, and foot, and has a near escape of being pressed to death. Apollyon spreads his bat wings at last, and flies away; but there remains the Valley of the Shadow of Death, the dark scene of lonely horrors. Two men meet him on the borders of it. They tell him the valley is full of spectres; and they warn him, if he values his life, to go back. Well Bunyan knew these spectres, those dreary misgivings that he was toiling after an illusion; that 'good' and 'evil' had no meaning except on earth, and for man's convenience; and that he himself was but a creature of a day, allowed a brief season of what is called existence, and then to pass away and be as if he had never been. It speaks well for Bunyan's honesty that this state of mind which religious people generally call wicked is placed directly in his Pilgrim's path, and he is compelled to pass through it. In the valley, close at the road-side, there is a pit, which is one of the mouths of hell. A wicked spirit whispers to him as he goes by. He imagines that the thought had proceeded out of his own heart.

The sky clears when he is beyond the gorge. Outside it are the caves where the two giants, Pope and Pagan, had lived in old times. Pagan had been dead many a day. Pope was still living, 'but he had grown so crazy and stiff in his joints that he could now do little more than sit in his cave's mouth, grinning at pilgrims as they went by, and biting his nails because he could not come at them.'

Here he overtakes 'Faithful,' a true pilgrim like himself. Faithful had met with trials; but his trials had not resembled Christian's. Christian's difficulties, like Bunyan's own, had been all spiritual. 'The lusts of the



flesh' seem to have had no attraction for him. Faithful had been assailed by 'Wanton,' and had been obliged to fly from her. He had not fallen into the slough; but he had been beguiled by the Old Adam, who offered him one of his daughters for a wife. In the Valley of the Shadow of Death he had found sunshine all the way. Doubts about the truth of religion had never troubled the simpler nature of the good Faithful.

Mr. Talkative is the next character introduced, and is one of the best figures which Bunyan has drawn; Mr. Talkative, with Scripture at his fingers' ends, and perfect master of all doctrinal subtleties, ready 'to talk of things heavenly or things earthly, things moral or things evangelical, things sacred or things profane, things past or things to come, things foreign or things at home, things essential or things circumstantial, provided that all be done to our profit.'

This gentleman would have taken in Faithful, who was awed by such a rush of volubility. Christian has seen him before, knows him well, and can describe him. 'He is the son of one Saywell. He dwelt in Prating Row. He is for any company and for any talk. As he talks now with you so will he talk when on the ale-bench. The more drink he hath in his crown, the more of these things he hath in his mouth. Religion hath no place in his heart, or home, or conversation; all that he hath lieth in his tongue, and his religion is to make a noise therewith.'

The elect, though they have ceased to be of the world, are still in the world. They are still part of the general community of mankind, and share, whether they like it or not, in the ordinary activities of life. Faithful and Christian have left the City of Destruction. They have



shaken off from themselves all liking for idle pleasures. They nevertheless find themselves in their journey at Vanity Fair, 'a fair set up by Beelzebub 5000 years ago.' Trade of all sorts went on at Vanity Fair, and people of all sorts were collected there : cheats, fools, asses, knaves, and rogues. Some were honest, many were dishonest ; some lived peaceably and uprightly, others robbed, murdered, seduced their neighbours' wives, or lied and perjured themselves. Vanity Fair was European society as it existed in the days of Charles II. Each nation was represented. There was British Row, French Row, and Spanish Row. 'The wares of Rome and her merchandise were greatly promoted at the fair, only the English nation with some others had taken a dislike to them.' The pilgrims appear on the scene as the Apostles appeared at Antioch and Rome, to tell the people that there were things in the world of more consequence than money and pleasure. The better sort listen. Public opinion in general calls them fools and Bedlamites. The fair becomes excited, disturbances are feared, and the authorities send to make inquiries. Authorities naturally disapprove of novelties ; and Christian and Faithful are arrested, beaten, and put in the cage. Their friends insist that they have done no harm, that they are innocent strangers teaching only what will make men better instead of worse. A riot follows. The authorities determine to make an example of them, and the result is the ever-memorable trial of the two pilgrims. They are brought in irons before my Lord Hategood, charged with 'disturbing the trade of the town, creating divisions, and making converts to their opinions in contempt of the law of the Prince.'

Faithful begins with an admission which would have

made it difficult for Hategood to let him off, for he says that the Prince they talked of, being Beelzebub, the enemy of the Lord, he defied him and all his angels. Three witnesses were then called: Envy, Superstition, and Pickthank.

Envy says that Faithful regards neither prince nor people, but does all he can to possess men with disloyal notions, which he call principles of faith and holiness.

Superstition says that he knows little of him, but has heard him say that 'our religion is naught, and such by which no man can please God, from which saying his Lordship well knows will follow that we are yet in our sins, and finally shall be damned.'

Pickthank deposes that he has heard Faithful rail on Beelzebub, and speak contemptuously of his honourable friends my Lord Old Man, my Lord Carnal Delight, my Lord Luxurious, my Lord Desire of Vain Glory, my Lord Lechery, Sir Having Greedy, and the rest of the nobility, besides which he has railed against his lordship on the bench himself, calling him an ungodly villain.

The evidence was perfectly true, and the prisoner, when called on for his defence, confirmed it. He says (avoiding the terms in which he was said to rail and the like) that 'the Prince of the town, with all the rabblement of his attendants by this gentleman named, are more fit for a being in hell than in this town or country.'

Lord Hategood has been supposed to have been drawn from one or other of Charles II.'s judges, perhaps from either Twisden or Chester, who had the conversation with Bunyan's wife. But it is difficult to see how either one or the other could have acted otherwise than they did. Faithful might be quite right. Hell might be and probably was the proper place for Beelzebub, and for all persons

holding authority under him. But as a matter of fact, a form of society did for some purpose or other exist, and had been permitted to exist for 5000 years, owning Beelzebub's sovereignty. It must defend itself, or must cease to be, and it could not be expected to make no effort at self-preservation. Faithful had come to Vanity Fair to make a revolution—a revolution extremely desirable, but one which it was unreasonable to expect the constituted authorities to allow to go forward. It was not a case of false witness. A prisoner who admits that he has taught the people that their Prince ought to be in hell, and has called the judge an ungodly villain, cannot complain if he is accused of preaching rebellion.

Lord Hategood charges the jury, and explains the law. 'There was an Act made,' he says, 'in the days of Pharaoh the Great, servant to our Prince, that lest those of a contrary religion should multiply and grow too strong for him, their males should be thrown into the river. There was also an Act made in the days of Nebuchadnezzar the Great, that whoever would not fall down and worship his golden image should be thrown into a fiery furnace. There was also an Act made in the days of Darius that whoso for some time called upon any God but him should be cast into the lion's den. Now the substance of these laws this rebel hath broken, not only in thought (which is not to be borne), but also in word and deed, which must, therefore, be intolerable. For that of Pharaoh, his law was made upon a supposition to prevent mischief, no crime being yet apparent. For the second and third you see his disputations against our religion, and for the treason he hath confessed he deserveth to die the death.'

'Then went the jury out, whose names were Mr. Blindman, Mr. Nogood, Mr. Malice, Mr. Lovelust, Mr.

Liveloose, Mr. Heady, Mr. Highmind, Mr. Enmity, Mr. Liar, Mr. Cruelty, Mr. Hatelight, and Mr. Implacable, who every one gave in his private verdict against him among themselves, and afterwards unanimously concluded to bring him in guilty before the judge. And first, Mr. Blindman, the foreman, said : I see clearly that this man is a heretic. Then said Mr. No Good, Away with such a fellow from the earth. Aye, said Mr. Malice, I hate the very looks of him. Then said Mr. Lovelust, I could never endure him. Nor I, said Mr. Liveloose, for he would always be condemning my way. Hang him, hang him, said Mr. Heady. A sorry scrub, said Mr. Highmind. My heart riseth against him, said Mr. Enmity. He is a rogue, said Mr. Liar. Hanging is too good for him, said Mr. Cruelty. Let us despatch him out of the way, said Mr. Hatelight. Then, said Mr. Implacable, might I have all the world given me, I could not be reconciled to him ; therefore, let us forthwith bring him in guilty of death.'

Abstract qualities of character were never clothed in more substantial flesh and blood than these jurymen. Spenser's knights in the ' Fairy Queen ' are mere shadows to them. Faithful was, of course, condemned, scourged, buffeted, lanced in his feet with knives, stoned, stabbed, at last burned, and spared the pain of travelling further on the narrow road. A chariot and horses were waiting to bear him through the clouds, the nearest way to the Celestial Gate. Christian, who it seems had been remanded, contrives to escape. He is joined by Hopeful, a convert whom he has made in the town, and they pursue their journey in company. A second person is useful dramatically, and Hopeful takes Faithful's place. Leaving Vanity Fair, they are again on the Pilgrim's road. There they encounter Mr. Bye-ends. Bye-ends comes from the



town of Plain-Speech, where he has a large kindred, My Lord Turnabout, my Lord Timeserver, Mr. Facing-both-ways, Mr. Two Tongues, the parson of the parish. Bye-ends himself was married to a daughter of Lady Feignings. Bunyan's invention in such things was inexhaustible.

They have more trials of the old kind with which Bunyan himself was so familiar. They cross the River of Life and even drink at it, yet for all this and directly after, they stray into Bye Path Meadow. They lose themselves in the grounds of Doubting Castle, and are seized upon by Giant Despair—still a prey to doubt—still uncertain whether religion be not a dream, even after they have fought with wild beasts in Vanity Fair and have drunk of the water of life. Nowhere does Bunyan show better how well he knew the heart of man. Christian even thinks of killing himself in the dungeons of Doubting Castle. Hopeful cheers him up, they break their prison, recover the road again, and arrive at the Delectable Mountains in Emmanuel's own land. There it might be thought the danger would be over, but it is not so. Even in Emmanuel's Land there is a door in the side of a hill which is a byeway to hell, and beyond Emmanuel's Land is the country of conceit, a new and special temptation for those who think that they are near salvation. Here they encounter 'a brisk lad of the neighbourhood,' needed soon after for a particular purpose, who is a good liver, prays devoutly, fasts regularly, pays tithes punctually, and hopes that everyone will get to heaven by the religion which he professes, provided he fears God and tries to do his duty. The name of this brisk lad is Ignorance. Leaving him, they are caught in a net by Flatterer, and are smartly whipped by 'a shining



one,' who lets them out of it. False ideas and vanity lay them open once more to their most dangerous enemy. They meet a man coming towards them from the direction in which they are going. They tell him that they are on the way to Mount Zion. He laughs scornfully and answers:—

'There is no such place as you dream of in all the world. When I was at home in my own country, I heard as you now affirm, and from hearing I went out to see; and have been seeking this city these twenty years, but I find no more of it than I did the first day I went out. I am going back again and will seek to refresh myself with things which I then cast away for hopes of that which I now see is not.'

Still uncertainty—even on the verge of eternity—strange, doubtless, and reprehensible to Right Reverend persons, who never 'cast away' anything; to whom a religious profession has been a highway to pleasure and preferment, who live in the comfortable assurance that as it has been in this life so it will be in the next. Only moral obliquity of the worst kind could admit a doubt about so excellent a religion as this. But Bunyan was not a Right Reverend. Christianity had brought him no palaces and large revenues, and a place among the great of the land. If Christianity was not true his whole life was folly and illusion, and the dread that it might be so clung to his belief like its shadow.

The way was still long. The pilgrims reach the Enchanted Ground and are drowsy and tired. Ignorance comes up with them again. He talks much about himself. He tells them of the good motives that come into his mind and comfort him as he walks. His heart tells him that he has left all for God and Heaven. His belief

and his life agree together, and he is humbly confident that his hopes are well-founded. When they speak to him of Salvation by Faith and Conviction of Sin, he cannot understand what they mean. As he leaves them they are reminded of one Temporary, 'once a forward man in religion.' Temporary dwelt in Graceless, 'a town two miles from Honesty, next door to one Turnback.' He 'was going on pilgrimage, but became acquainted with one Save Self, and was never more heard of.'

These figures all mean something. They correspond in part to Bunyan's own recollection of his own trials; partly he is indulging his humour by describing others who were more astray than he was. It was over at last: the pilgrims arrive at the land of Beulah, the beautiful sunset after the storms were all past. Doubting Castle can be seen no more, and between them and their last rest there remains only the deep river over which there is no bridge, the river of Death. On the hill beyond the waters glitter the towers and domes of the Celestial City; but through the river they must first pass, and they find it deeper or shallower according to the strength of their faith. They go through, Hopeful feeling the bottom all along; Christian still in character, not without some horror, and frightened by hobgoblins. On the other side they are received by angels, and are carried to their final home, to live for ever in the Prince's presence. Then follows the only passage which the present writer reads with regret in this admirable book. It is given to the self-righteous Ignorance who, doubtless, had been provoking with 'his good motives that comforted him as he walked;' but Bunyan's zeal might have been satisfied by inflicting a lighter chastisement upon him. He comes up to the river. He crosses without the difficulties which

attended Christian and Hopeful. 'It happened that there was then at the place one Vain Hope, a Ferryman, that with his boat' (some viaticum or priestly absolution) 'helped him over.' He ascends the hill, and approaches the city, but no angels are in attendance, 'neither did any man meet him with the least encouragement.' Above the gate there was the verse written—'Blessed are they that do His commandments that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gate into the city.' Bunyan, who believed that no man could keep the commandments, and had no right to anything but damnation, must have introduced the words as if to mock the unhappy wretch who, after all, had tried to keep the commandments as well as most people, and was seeking admittance, with a conscience moderately at ease. 'He was asked by the men that looked over the gate—Whence come you and what would you have?' He answered, 'I have eaten and drunk in the presence of the King, and he has taught in our street.' Then they asked him for his certificate, that they might go in and show it to the king. So he fumbled in his bosom for one and found none. Then said they, 'Have you none?' But the man answered never a word. So they told the king but he would not come down to see him, but commanded the two shining ones that conducted Christian and Hopeful to the city to go out and take Ignorance and bind him hand and foot, and have him away. Then they took him up and carried him through the air to the door in the side of the hill, and put him in there. 'Then,' so Bunyan ends, 'I saw that there was a way to Hell even from the gates of Heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction; so I awoke, and behold it was a dream!'

Poor Ignorance! Hell—such a place as Bunyan

imagined Hell to be—was a hard fate for a miserable mortal who had failed to comprehend the true conditions of justification. We are not told that he was a vain boaster. He could not have advanced so near to the door of Heaven if he had not been really a decent man, though vain and silly. Behold, it was a dream! The dreams which come to us when sleep is deep on the soul may be sent direct from some revealing power. When we are near waking, the supernatural insight may be refracted through human theory.

Charity will hope that the vision of Ignorance cast bound into the mouth of Hell, when he was knocking at the gate of Heaven, came through Homer's ivory gate, and that Bunyan here was a mistaken interpreter of the spiritual tradition. The fierce inferences of Puritan theology are no longer credible to us; yet nobler men than the Puritans are not to be found in all English history. It will be well if the clearer sight which enables us to detect their errors, enables us also to recognise their excellence.

The second part of the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' like most second parts, is but a feeble reverberation of the first. It is comforting, no doubt, to know that Christian's wife and children were not left to their fate in the City of Destruction. But Bunyan had given us all that he had to tell about the journey, and we do not need a repetition of it. Of course there are touches of genius. No writing of Bunyan's could be wholly without it. But the rough simplicity is gone, and instead of it there is a tone of sentiment which is almost mawkish. Giants, dragons, and angelic champions carry us into a spurious fairy land, where the knight-errant is a preacher in disguise. Fair ladies and love matches, however decorously chastened,

suit ill with the sternness of the mortal conflict between the soul and sin. Christiana and her children are tolerated for the pilgrim's sake to whom they belong. Had they appealed to our interest on their own merits, we would have been contented to wish them well through their difficulties, and to trouble ourselves no further about them.



## CHAPTER X.

### LAST DAYS AND DEATH.

LITTLE remains to be told of Bunyan's concluding years. No friends preserved his letters. No diaries of his own survive to gratify curiosity. Men truly eminent think too meanly of themselves or their work to care much to be personally remembered. He lived for sixteen years after his release from the gaol, and those years were spent in the peaceful discharge of his congregational duties, in writing, in visiting the scattered members of the Baptist communion, or in preaching in the villages and woods. His outward circumstances were easy. He had a small but well-provided house in Bedford, into which he collected rare and valuable pieces of old furniture and plate, and other articles—presents, probably, from those who admired him. He visited London annually to preach in the Baptist churches. The 'Pilgrim's Progress' spread his fame over England, over Europe, and over the American settlements. It was translated into many languages; and so catholic was its spirit, that it was adapted with a few alterations for the use even of the Catholics themselves. He abstained, as he had done steadily throughout his life, from all interference with politics, and the Government in turn never again meddled with him. He even received offers of promotion to larger spheres of action

which might have tempted a meaner nature. But he could never be induced to leave Bedford, and there he quietly stayed through changes of ministry, Popish plots, and Monmouth rebellions, while the terror of a restoration of Popery was bringing on the Revolution; careless of kings and cabinets, and confident that Giant Pope had lost his power for harm, and thenceforward could only bite his nails at the passing pilgrims. Once only, after the failure of the Exclusion Bill, he seems to have feared that violent measures might again be tried against him. It is even said that he was threatened with arrest, and it was on this occasion that he made over his property to his wife. The policy of James II., however, transparently treacherous though it was, for the time gave security to the Non-conformist congregations, and in the years which immediately preceded the final expulsion of the Stuarts, liberty of conscience was under fewer restrictions than it had been in the most rigorous days of the Reformation, or under the Long Parliament itself. Thus the anxiety passed away, and Bunyan was left undisturbed to finish his earthly work.

He was happy in his family. His blind child, for whom he had been so touchingly anxious, had died while he was in prison. His other children lived and did well; and his brave companion, who had spoken so stoutly for him to the judges, continued at his side. His health, it was said, had suffered from his confinement; but the only serious illness which we hear of, was an attack of 'sweating sickness,' which came upon him in 1687, and from which he never thoroughly recovered. He was then fifty-nine, and in the next year he died.

His end was characteristic. It was brought on by exposure when he was engaged in an act of charity. A

quarrel had broken out in a family at Reading with which Bunyan had some acquaintance. A father had taken offence at his son, and threatened to disinherit him. Bunyan undertook a journey on horseback from Bedford to Reading in the hope of reconciling them. He succeeded, but at the cost of his life. Returning by London he was overtaken on the road by a storm of rain, and was wetted through before he could find shelter. The chill, falling on a constitution already weakened by illness, brought on fever. He was able to reach the house of Mr. Strudwick, one of his London friends; but he never left his bed afterwards. In ten days he was dead. The exact date is uncertain. It was towards the end of August 1688, between two and three months before the landing of King William. He was buried in Mr. Strudwick's vault in the Dissenters' burying-ground at Bunhill Fields. His last words were 'Take me, for I come to Thee.'

So ended, at the age of sixty, a man who, if his importance may be measured by the influence which he has exerted over succeeding generations, must be counted among the most extraordinary persons whom England has produced. It has been the fashion to dwell on the disadvantages of his education, and to regret the carelessness of nature which brought into existence a man of genius in a tinker's hut at Elstow. Nature is less partial than she appears, and all situations in life have their compensations along with them.

Circumstances, I should say, qualified Bunyan perfectly well for the work which he had to do. If he had gone to school, as he said, with Aristotle and Plato; if he had been broken in at a university and been turned into a bishop; if he had been in any one of the learned pro-

fessions, he might easily have lost or might have never known the secret of his powers. He was born to be the Poet-apostle of the English middle classes, imperfectly educated like himself; and, being one of themselves, he had the key of their thoughts and feelings in his own heart. Like nine out of ten of his countrymen, he came into the world with no fortune but his industry. He had to work with his hands for his bread, and to advance by the side of his neighbours along the road of common business. His knowledge was scanty, though of rare quality. He knew his Bible probably by heart. He had studied history in Foxe's 'Martyrs,' but nowhere else that we can trace. The rest of his mental furniture was gathered at first hand from his conscience, his life, and his occupations. Thus every idea which he received falling into a soil naturally fertile, sprouted up fresh, vigorous, and original. He confessed to have felt—(as a man of his powers could hardly have failed to feel)—continued doubts about the Bible and the reality of the Divine government. It has been well said that when we look into the world to find the image of God, it is as if we were to stand before a looking-glass expecting to see ourselves reflected there, and to see nothing. Education scarcely improves our perception in this respect; and wider information, wider acquaintance with the thoughts of other men in other ages and countries, might as easily have increased his difficulties as have assisted him in overcoming them. He was not a man who could have contented himself with compromises and half-convictions. No force could have subdued him into a decent Anglican divine—a 'Mr. Two Tongues, parson of the parish.' He was passionate and thorough-going. The authority of conscience presented itself to him only in the shape of religious obli-

gation. Religion once shaken into a 'perhaps,' would have had no existence to him ; and it is easy to conceive a university-bred Bunyan, an intellectual meteor, flaring uselessly across the sky and disappearing in smoke and nothingness.

Powerful temperaments are necessarily intense. Bunyan, born a tinker, had heard right and wrong preached to him in the name of the Christian creed. He concluded after a struggle that Christianity was true, and on that conviction he built himself up into what he was. It might have been the same perhaps with Burns had he been born a century before. Given Christianity as an unquestionably true account of the situation and future prospects of man, the feature of it most appalling to the imagination is that hell-fire—a torment exceeding the most horrible which fancy can conceive, and extending into eternity—awaits the enormous majority of the human race. The dreadful probability seized hold on the young Bunyan's mind. He shuddered at it when awake. In the visions of the night it came before him in the tremendous details of the dreadful reality. It became the governing thought in his nature.

Such a belief, if it does not drive a man to madness, will at least cure him of trifling. It will clear his mind of false sentiment, take the nonsense out of him, and enable him to resist vulgar temptation as nothing else will. The danger is that the mind may not bear the strain, that the belief itself may crack and leave nothing. Bunyan was hardly tried, but in him the belief did not crack. It spread over his character. It filled him first with terror ; then with a loathing of sin, which entailed so awful a penalty ; then, as his personal fears were allayed



by the recognition of Christ, it turned to tenderness and pity.

There was no fanaticism in Bunyan ; nothing harsh or savage. His natural humour perhaps saved him. His few recorded sayings all refer to the one central question ; but healthy seriousness often best expresses itself in playful quaintness. He was once going somewhere disguised as a waggoner. He was overtaken by a constable who had a warrant to arrest him. The constable asked him if he knew that devil of a fellow Bunyan. 'Know him !' Bunyan said. 'You might call him a devil if you knew him as well as I once did.'

A Cambridge student was trying to show him what a divine thing reason was—'reason, the chief glory of man which distinguished him from a beast,' &c., &c.

Bunyan growled out : 'Sin distinguishes man from beast. Is sin divine ?'

He was extremely tolerant in his terms of Church membership. He offended the stricter part of his congregation by refusing even to make infant baptism a condition of exclusion. The only persons with whom he declined to communicate were those whose lives were openly immoral. His chief objection to the Church of England was the admission of the ungodly to the Sacraments. He hated party titles and quarrels upon trifles. He desired himself to be called a Christian or a Believer, or 'any name which was approved by the Holy Ghost.' Divisions, he said, were to Churches like wars to countries. Those who talked most about religion cared least for it ; and controversies about doubtful things, and things of little moment, ate up all zeal for things which were practicable and indisputable.

'In countenance,' wrote a friend, 'he appeared to be

of a stern and rough temper, but in his conversation mild and affable; not given to loquacity or to much discourse in company unless some urgent occasion required it; observing never to boast of himself or his parts, but rather to seem low in his own eyes, and submit himself to the judgment of others; abhorring lying and swearing, being just, in all that lay in his power, to his word; not seeming to revenge injuries, loving to reconcile differences and make friendships with all. He had a sharp quick eye, with an excellent discerning of persons, being of good judgment and quick wit.' 'He was tall of stature, strong boned, though not corpulent, somewhat of a ruddy face, with sparkling eyes, wearing his hair on his upper lip; his hair reddish, but in his later days time had sprinkled it with grey; his nose well set, but not declining or bending; his mouth moderate large, his forehead something high, and his habit always plain and modest.'

He was himself indifferent to advancement, and he did not seek it for his family. A London merchant offered to take his son into his house. 'God,' he said, 'did not send me to advance my family, but to preach the Gospel.' He had no vanity—an exemption extremely rare in those who are personally much before the public. The personal popularity was in fact the part of his situation which he least liked. When he was to preach in London, 'if there was but one day's notice the meeting house was crowded to overflowing.' Twelve hundred people would be found collected before seven o'clock on a dark winter's morning to hear a lecture from him. In Zoar Street, Southwark, his church was sometimes so crowded that he had to be lifted to the pulpit stairs over the congregation's heads. It pleased him, but he was on the watch against the pleasure of being himself admired. A friend compli-

mented him once after service, on 'the sweet sermon' which he had delivered. 'You need not remind me of that,' he said. 'The Devil told me of it before I was out of the pulpit.'

'Conviction of sin' has become a phrase, shallow and ineffectual even in those who use it most sincerely. Yet moral evil is still the cause of nine-tenths of human misery, and it is not easy to measure the value of a man who could prolong among his fellow-creatures the sense of the deadly nature of it, even under the forms of a decomposing theology. Times are changing. The intellectual current is bearing us we know not where, and the course of the stream is in a direction which leads us far from the conclusions in which Bunyan and the Puritans established themselves; but the truths which are most essential for us to know cannot be discerned by speculative arguments. Chemistry cannot tell us why some food is wholesome and other food is poisonous. That food is best for us which best nourishes the body into health and strength; and a belief in a Supernatural Power which has given us a law to live by and to which we are responsible for our conduct, has alone, of all the influences known to us, succeeded in ennobling and elevating the character of man. The particular theories which men have formed about it have often been wild and extravagant. Imagination, agitated by fear or stimulated by pious enthusiasm, has peopled heaven with demigods and saints—creations of fancy, human forms projected upon a mist and magnified into celestial images. How much is true of all that men have believed in past times and have now ceased to believe, how much has been a too eager dream, no one now can tell. It may be that other foundations may be laid hereafter for human conduct on

which an edifice can be raised no less fair and beautiful ; but no signs of it are as yet apparent.

So far as we yet know, morality rests upon a sense of obligation ; and obligation has no meaning except as implying a Divine command, without which it would cease to be. Until 'duty' can be presented to us in a shape which will compel our recognition of it with equal or superior force, the passing away of 'the conviction of sin' can operate only to obscure our aspirations after a high ideal of life and character. The scientific theory may be correct, and it is possible that we may be standing on the verge of the most momentous intellectual revolution which has been experienced in the history of our race. It may be so, and also it may not be so. It may be that the most important factors in the scientific equation are beyond the reach of human intellect. However it be, the meat which gives strength to the man is poison to the child ; and as yet we are still children, and are likely to remain children. 'Every relief from outward restraint,' says one who was not given to superstition, 'if it be not attended with increased power of self-command, is simply fatal.' Men of intelligence, therefore, to whom life is not a theory, but a stern fact, conditioned round with endless possibilities of wrong and suffering, though they may never again adopt the letter of Bunyan's creed, will continue to see in conscience an authority for which culture is no substitute ; they will conclude that in one form or other responsibility is not a fiction but a truth ; and, so long as this conviction lasts, the 'Pilgrim's Progress' will still be dear to all men of all creeds who share in it, even though it pleases the 'elect' modern philosophers to describe its author as a 'Philistine of genius.'





# English Men of Letters

EDITED BY JOHN MORLEY.

BENTLEY





# BENTLEY

BY

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

THE following are the principal sources for an estimate of Bentley's life and work :—

1. Life of Bentley, by J. H. Monk, 4to, London, 1830 : 2nd ed., 2 vols. 8vo, 1833.—2. Bentley's Correspondence, ed. C. Wordsworth, 2 vols., Lond. 1842.—3. Bentley's Works, ed. Alex. Dyce, 1836—38. Vols. I and II :—Dissertation on Letters of Phalaris, (1) as published in 1699, (2) as originally printed in Wotton's *Reflections*, 1697. Epistola ad Ioannem Millium. Vol. III :—Boyle Lectures, with Newton's Letters : Sermons : Remarks upon a late Discourse of Free-thinking : Proposals for an edition of the New Testament : Answer to the Remarks of Conyers Middleton.—4. Bentley's Fragments of Callimachus, in the edition of Graevius, Utrecht, 1697, reprinted in Blomfield's ed., London, 1815.—5. Emendations on Menander and Philemon (1710), reprinted, Cambridge, 1713.—6. Horace, Camb. 1711, 2nd ed., Amsterdam, 1713.—7. Terence, Camb. 1726, 2nd ed., Amsterdam, 1728.—8. Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Lond. 1732.—9. Manilius, Lond. 1739.

Notes by Bentley appeared during his lifetime in the books of other scholars. Since his death, many more have been published from his MSS. These, while varying much in fulness and value, cannot be overlooked in a survey of the field which his studies covered. The subjoined list comprises the greater part of them :—

On Cicero's Tusculan Disputations, in Gaisford's ed., Oxford, 1805.—Hephaestion, in Gaisford's ed., 1810.—Lucretius,



in Oxford ed., 1818.—Horace (*curae novissimae*), in the Cambridge Museum Criticum I. 194—6, ed. T. Kidd.—Ovid, in the Classical Journal, xix. 168, 258, ed. G. Burges.—Lucan, ed. R. Cumberland, Strawberry Hill, 1760.—Silius Italicus, Class. Journ. iii. 381.—L. Annaeus Seneca, ib. xxxvii. 11, ed. T. Kidd.—Nicander, in Museum Criticum, i. 370, 445, ed. J. H. Monk.—Aristophanes, in Classical Journal, xi. 131, 248, xii. 104, 352, xiii. 132, 336, xiv. 130, ed. G. Burges; and in Museum Criticum, ii. 126, ed. J. H. Monk.—Sophocles, Theocritus, Bion, Moschus, ed. E. Maltby in Morell's Thesaurus, reprinted in Classical Journal, xiii. 244.—Philostratus, in Olearius's edition (1709).—Hierocles, in Needham's edition (1709).—Plautus, in E. A. Sonnenschein's ed. of the Captivi, p. 135, Lond. 1880.—Iliad i. ii, at the end of J. Maehly's memoir of Bentley (1868), from the MS. at Trinity College, Cambridge.—Selected Notes on the Greek Testament (from the MS. at Trin. Coll. Camb.) including those on the Epistle to the Galatians, in *Bentleii Critica Sacra*, ed. A. A. Ellis, Camb. 1862.—A few anecdotes from Bentley's MS. notes on Homer (at Trin. Coll., Camb.) are given below, p. 153.

R. Cumberland's *Memoirs* (4to, 1806, 2nd edition in 2 vols. 8vo, 1807) deserve to be consulted independently of Monk's quotations from them. The memoir of Bentley by F. A. Wolf, in his *Litterarische Analekten* (pp. 1—89, Berlin, 1816), has the permanent interest of its authorship and its date. Rud's Diary, so useful for a part of Bentley's college history, was edited with some additional letters by H. R. Luard for the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, 1860. De Quincey's essay—originally a review of Monk—has every charm of his style; the sometimes whimsical judgments need not be taken too seriously. Hartley Coleridge's comments on Monk's facts may be seen in the short biography of Bentley which he wrote in the *Worthies of Yorkshire and Lancashire* (pp. 65—174). In 'Richard Bentley, eine Biographie' (Leipzig,

1868), Jacob Maehly gives a concise sketch for German readers, on Monk's plan of a continuous chronological narrative, in which notices of the literary works are inserted as they occur.

It is proper to state the points which are distinctive of the present volume:—1. In regard to the external facts of Bentley's life, I have been able to add some traits or illustrations from contemporary or other sources: these are chiefly in chapters I, III, VII, XII.—2. Chapter VI is condensed from some results of studies in the University life of Bentley's time and in the history of Trinity College.—3. The controversy on the Letters of Phalaris has hitherto been most familiar to English readers through De Quincey's essay on Bentley, or the brilliant passage in Macaulay's essay on Temple. Both versions are based on Monk's. The account given here will be found to present some matters under a different light. In such cases the views are those to which I was led by a careful examination of the original sources, and of all the literary evidence which I could find.—4. The aim has been not more to sketch the facts of Bentley's life than to estimate his work, the character of his powers, and his place in scholarship. Here the fundamental materials are Bentley's writings themselves. To these I have given a comparatively large share of the allotted space. My treatment of them has been independent of any predecessor.

The courtesy of the Master of Trinity afforded me an opportunity of using Bentley's marginal notes on Homer at a time when they would not otherwise have been accessible. Mr Tyrrell, Regius Professor of Greek in the University of Dublin, favoured me with information regarding a manuscript in the Library. Prof. A.

Michaelis, of Strassburg, and Mr J. W. Clark, of Trinity College, Cambridge, kindly lent me some books and tracts relating to Bentley.

My thanks are especially due to Dr Hort, for reading the proof-sheets of chapter x; and to Mr Munro, for reading those of chapters VIII and IX. To both I have owed most valuable suggestions. For others, on many points, I have been indebted to Dr Luard, Registry of the University of Cambridge; who, with a kindness which I cannot adequately acknowledge, has done me the great favour of reading the whole book during its passage through the press.

THE COLLEGE, GLASGOW,  
February, 1882.

## ANNALS OF BENTLEY'S LIFE.

	aet.	I. EARLIER PERIOD.—1662—1699.
1662		Jan. 27. Birth.
1672	10	Goes to Wakefield School.
1676	14	Enters St John's Coll., Cambridge.
1680	18	B.A. Degree.
1682	20	Master of Spalding School. Tutor to J. Stillingfleet.
1683	21	M.A. Degree.
1685	23	<b>James II.</b>
1689	27	<b>William and Mary.</b> Goes with J. Stillingfleet to Oxford.
1690	28	Ordained. Chaplain to Bp Stillingfleet.
1691	29	<i>Letter to Mill.</i>
1692	30	<i>Boyle Lectures.</i> Prebendary of Worcester. Temple's <i>Essay</i> .
1693	31	<i>Fragments of Callimachus.</i> Nominated King's Librarian.
1694	32	Appointed, April 12. Wotton's <i>Reflections</i> .
1695	33	Chaplain in Ordinary to King.—F.R.S.—Boyle's <i>Phalaris</i> .
1696	34	Promotes reparation of Camb. Press.—D.D.
1697	35	First essay on <i>Phalaris</i> in 2nd ed. of Wotton.
1698	36	Jan. ' <i>Boyle against Bentley</i> .'
1699	37	Mar. ' <i>Bentley against Boyle</i> .'—Master of Trin. Coll. Camb.

	act.	II. AT CAMBRIDGE.—1700—1742.
1700	38	Feb. 1. Installed at Trin.—Vice-Chancellor.
1701	39	Jan. 7. Marriage.—Archdeacon of Ely.
1702	40	<b>Anne.</b>
1702-4	40-2	College reforms.—Swift's <i>Battle of the Books</i> (1704).
1706-8	44-6	Aids L. Küster, T. Hemsterhuys.
1710	48	Feb. 10. Petition from Fellows of Trin. to Bp Moore. <i>Menander and Philemon</i> .—Thornhill's portrait of B.
1711	49	Dec. 8. <i>Horace</i> .
1713	51	Bp cites B. to Ely House.— <i>Remarks</i> in reply to Collins.
1714	52	FIRST TRIAL AT ELY HOUSE.—July 31. Bp Moore dies before judgment has been given. Aug. 1. Death of Queen Anne. <b>George I.</b>
1715	53	Jacobite Revolt. B.'s <i>Sermon on Popery</i> .
1716	54	Petition from Fellows of Trin. to Crown.
1717	55	B. Regius Prof. of Divinity. George I. visits Cambridge.
1718	56	B. arrested. Deprived of Degrees by Senate (Oct. 17).
1719	57	B. makes terms with Miller.
1720	58	<i>Proposals</i> for edition of New Testament.
1724	62	Mar. 26. B.'s degrees restored.—Declines see of Bristol.
1725	63	B.'s Latin speech at Commencement.
1726	64	<i>Terence</i> published.
1727	65	<b>George II.</b> Death of Newton.
1728	66	George II. at Cambridge.—B.'s illness.—Colbatch active.
1729	67	Bp Greene cites B. to appear. Veto by King's Bench.
1730	68	Senate House opened.
1731	69	Fire at Cottonian Library.
1732	70	B.'s edition of <i>Paradise Lost</i> . He undertakes Homer.
1733	71	SECOND TRIAL AT ELY HOUSE.
1734	72	April 27. Bp Greene sentences B. to deprivation.
1735-7	73-5	Efforts to procure execution of the judgment.
1738	76	April 22. End of the struggle. B. remains in possession.
1739	77	<i>Manilius</i> .
1740	78	Death of Mrs Bentley.
1742	80	March. Pope's enlarged <i>Dunciad</i> , with verses on B. June. B. examines for the Craven.—July 14. His death.

## DATES OF SOME PRINCIPAL WORKS.

1691	29	Letter to Mill.
1692	30	Boyle Lectures.
1693	31	Fragments of Callimachus.
1699	37	Enlarged Dissertation on Phalaris.
1710	48	Emendations on Menander and Philemon.
1711	49	Horace.
1713	51	Remarks on a late Discourse of Free-thinking.
1726	64	Terence.
1732	70	Edition of <i>Paradise Lost</i> .
1739	77	Manilius.

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# BENTLEY.

## CHAPTER I.

### EARLY LIFE. THE LETTER TO MILL.

RICHARD BENTLEY was born on January 27, 1662. A remarkable variety of interest belongs to his life of eighty years. He is the classical critic whose thoroughly original genius set a new example of method, and gave a decisive bent to the subsequent course of scholarship. Among students of the Greek Testament he is memorable as the first who defined a plan for constructing the whole text directly from the oldest documents. His English style has a place of its own in the transition from the prose of the seventeenth century to that of the eighteenth. During forty years he was the most prominent figure of a great English University at a stirring period. And everything that he did or wrote bears a vivid impress of personal character. The character may alternately attract and repel; it may provoke a feeling in which indignation is tempered only by a sense of the ludicrous, or it may irresistibly appeal to our admiration; but at all moments and in all moods it is signally masterful.

His birthplace was Oulton, a township in the Parish of Rothwell, near Wakefield, in the West Riding of Yorkshire. His family were yeomen of the richer class, who for some generations had held property in the neighbourhood of Halifax. Bentley's grandfather had been a captain in the royalist army during the civil war, and had died while a prisoner in the hands of the enemy. The Bentleys suffered in fortune for their attachment to the cavalier party, but Thomas Bentley, Richard's father, still owned a small estate at Woodlesford, a village in the same parish as Oulton. After the death of his first wife, Thomas Bentley, then an elderly man, married in 1661 Sarah, daughter of Richard Willie, of Oulton, who is described as a stonemason, but seems to have been rather what would now be called a builder, and must have been in pretty good circumstances; he is said to have held a major's commission in the royal army during the troubles. It was after him that his daughter's firstborn was called Richard. Bentley's literary assailants in later years endeavoured to represent him as a sort of ploughboy who had been developed into a learned boor; while his amiable and accomplished grandson, Richard Cumberland, exhibited a pardonable tendency to overestimate the family claims. Bentley himself appears to have said nothing on the subject.

He was taught Latin grammar by his mother. From a day-school at Methley, a village near Oulton, he was sent to the Wakefield Grammar School—probably when he was not more than eleven years old, as he went to Cambridge at fourteen. Schoolboy life must have been more cheerful after the Restoration than it had been before,—to judge from that lively picture in

North's 'Lives' of the school at Bury St Edmund's, where the master—a staunch royalist—was forced, 'in the dregs of time,' to observe 'super-hypocritical fastings and seekings,' and 'walked to Church after his brigade of boys, there to endure the infliction of divers holders-forth.' Then the King came to his own again, and this scholastic martyr had the happy idea of 'publishing his cavaliership by putting all the boys at his school into red cloaks;' 'of whom he had near thirty to parade before him, through that observing town, to church; which made no vulgar appearance.' The only notice of Bentley's school-life by himself (so far as I know) is in Cumberland's *Memoirs*, and is highly characteristic. 'I have had from him at times whilst standing at his elbow'—says his grandson, who was then a boy about nine years old—'a complete and entertaining narrative of his schoolboy days, with the characters of his different masters very humorously displayed, and the punishments described which they at times would wrongfully inflict upon him for seeming to be idle and regardless of his task,—*When the dunces, he would say, could not discover that I was pondering it in my mind, and fixing it more firmly in my memory, than if I had been bawling it out amongst the rest of my schoolfellows.*' However, he seems to have retained through life a warm regard for Wakefield School. It had a high reputation. Another of its pupils, a few years later, was John Potter,—author of the once popular work on Greek Antiquities, editor of Lycophron, and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury.

Bentley was only thirteen when his father died. His grandfather, Richard Willie, decided that he should go to the University without much more delay. The boy had his own way to make; his father's small estate



had been left to a son by the first marriage; and in those days there was nothing to hinder a precocious lad from matriculating at fourteen, though the ordinary age was already seventeen or eighteen. On May 24, 1676, 'Ricardus Bentley de Oulton' was enrolled in the Admission Book of St John's College. The choice of a University may have been influenced by the fact that John Baskerville, the master of Wakefield School, was a member of Emmanuel College, Cambridge; the choice of a College, partly by the fact that some scholarships for natives of Yorkshire had been founded at St John's by Sir Marmaduke Constable. Bentley, like Isaac Newton at Trinity, entered as a subsizar, a student who receives certain allowances. St John's College was just then the largest in the University, and appears to have been as efficient as it was distinguished. The only relic of Bentley's undergraduate life is a copy of English verses on the Gunpowder Plot. That stirring theme was long a stock subject for College exercises. Bentley's verses have the jerky vigour of a youth whose head is full of classical allusions, and who is bent on making points. The social life of the University probably did not engage very much of his time; and it is left to us to conjecture how much he saw of two Cambridge contemporaries who afterwards wrote against him,—Richard Johnson, of his own College, and Garth, the poet, of Peterhouse; or of William Wotton, his firm friend in later life—that 'juvenile prodigy' who was a boy of fourteen when Bentley took his degree, and yet already a Bachelor of Arts.

Nothing is known of Bentley's classical studies while he was an undergraduate. His own statement, that some of his views on metrical questions dated from

earliest manhood (*iam ab adolescentia*), is too vague to prove anything. Monk remarks that there were no prizes for classics at Cambridge then. It may be observed, however, that there was one very important prize—the Craven University Scholarship, founded in 1647. But no competition is recorded between 1670, when Bentley was eight years old, and 1681, the year after he took his first degree. The studies of the Cambridge Schools were Logic, Ethics, Natural Philosophy, and Mathematics. Bentley took high honours in these. His place was nominally sixth in the first class, but really third, since three of those above him were men of straw. The Vice-Chancellor and the two Proctors then possessed the privilege of interpolating one name each in the list, simply as a compliment, and they naturally felt that such a compliment was nothing if it was not courageous. Bentley's degree had no real likeness, of course, to that of third Wrangler now; modern Mathematics were only beginning, and the other subjects of the Schools had more weight; the testing process, too, was far from thorough.

Bentley never got a Fellowship. In his time,—indeed, until the present century,—there were territorial restrictions at almost all Colleges. As a native of Yorkshire, he had been elected to a Constable scholarship, but the same circumstance excluded him from a greater prize. When he graduated, two Fellowships at St John's were already held by Yorkshiremen, and a third representative of the same county was inadmissible. He was a candidate, indeed, in 1682; but as no person not in Priest's Orders was eligible on that occasion, he must have gone in merely to show what he could do. The College was enabled to recognise him in other ways,

however. He was appointed to the mastership of Spalding School in Lincolnshire. At the end of about a year, he quitted this post for one which offered attractions of a different kind. Dr Stillingfleet—then Dean of St Paul's, and formerly a Fellow of St John's, Cambridge—wanted a tutor for his second son; and his choice fell on Bentley.

A youth of twenty-one, with Bentley's tastes and powers, could scarcely have been placed in a more advantageous position. Stillingfleet was already foremost among those scholarly divines who were regarded as the champions of Christianity against deists or materialists, and more particularly as defenders of the English Church against designs which had been believed to menace it since the Restoration. The researches embodied in Stillingfleet's *Origines Sacrae* and other works had for their general aim to place the Anglican religion on the historical basis of primitive times. In the course of his extensive and varied studies, he had gradually formed that noble library—one of the finest private collections then existing in England—which after his death was purchased for Dublin by Archbishop Marsh. Free access to such a library was a priceless boon for Bentley. At the Dean's house he would also meet the best literary society in London; and his 'patron'—to use the phrase of that day—received him on a footing which enabled him to profit fully by such opportunities. Stillingfleet could sympathise with the studies of his son's young tutor. In his own early days, after taking his degree at the same College, Stillingfleet had accepted a domestic tutorship, and 'besides his attendance on his proper province, the instruction of the young gentleman,' had found time to set about writing his *Irenicum*,—the endeavour of a

sanguine youth to make peace between Presbyterians and Prelacy. A contemporary biographer (Dr Timothy Goodwin) has thus described Dr Stillingfleet. 'He was tall, graceful, and well-proportioned; his countenance comely, fresh, and awful; in his conversation, cheerful and discreet, obliging, and very instructive.' To the day of his death in 1699 Stillingfleet was Bentley's best friend,—the architect, indeed, of his early fortunes.

The next six years, from the twenty-first to the twenty-seventh of his age (1683—1689), were passed by Bentley in Dr Stillingfleet's family. It was during this period, when he enjoyed much leisure and the use of a first-rate library, that Bentley laid the solid foundations of his learning. He enlarged his study of the Greek and Latin classics, writing notes in the margin of his books as he went along. In those days, it will be remembered, such studies were not facilitated by copious dictionaries of classical biography, geography, and antiquities, or by those well-ordered and comprehensive lexicons which exhibit at a glance the results attained by the labours of successive generations. Bentley now began to make for himself lists of the authors whom he found cited by the ancient grammarians; and it may be observed that a series of detractors, from Boyle's allies to Richard Dawes, constantly twit Bentley with owing all his learning to 'indexes.' Thus, in a copy of verses preserved by Granger, Bentley figures as

Zoilus, tir'd with turning o'er  
Dull indexes, a precious store.

At this time he also studied the New Testament critically. His labours on the Old Testament may be described in his own words. 'I wrote, before I was twenty-four years



of age, a sort of *Hexapla*; a thick volume in quarto, in the first column of which I inserted every word of the Hebrew Bible alphabetically; and, in five other columns, all the various interpretations of those words in the Chaldee, Syriac, Vulgate, Latin, Septuagint, and Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, that occur in the whole Bible.'

Bentley did not take Orders till 1690, when he was twenty-eight, but he had probably always intended to do so. His delay may have been partly due to the troubles of James II.'s reign. Immediately after the Revolution Dean Stillingfleet was raised to the see of Worcester. His eldest son had gone to Cambridge; but Bentley's pupil, James, was sent to Wadham College, Oxford. Bentley accompanied him thither; and, having taken an *ad eundem* degree of M.A., was placed on the books of Wadham College. He continued to reside at Oxford till the latter part of 1690; and we find him engaged on behalf of the University in negotiations for the purchase of the library which had belonged to Dr Isaac Voss, Canon of Windsor. This valuable collection—including the books of Gerard John Voss, Isaac's father—ultimately went to Leyden; not, apparently, through any fault of Bentley's, though that was alleged during his controversy with Boyle.

While living at Oxford, Bentley enjoyed access to the Bodleian Library; and, as if his ardour had been stimulated by a survey of its treasures, it is at this time that his literary projects first come into view. 'I had decided' (he informs Dr Mill) 'to edit the fragments of all the Greek poets, with emendations and notes, as a single great work.' Perhaps even Bentley can scarcely then have realised the whole magnitude of such a task,



and would have gauged it more accurately two years later, when he had edited the fragments of Callimachus. Nor was this the only vast scheme that floated before his mind. In a letter to Dr Edward Bernard (then Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford) he discloses a project of editing three Greek lexicons—those of Hesychius and Suidas, with the *Etymologicum Magnum*—in three parallel columns for each page. These would make three folio volumes; a fourth volume would contain other lexicons (as those of Julius Pollux, Erotian, and Phrynichus) which did not lend themselves to the arrangement in column. His thoughts were also busy with Philostratus (the Greek biographer of the Sophists),—with Lucretius,—and with the astronomical poet Manilius. Bentley excelled all previous scholars in accurate knowledge of the classical metres. His sojourn at Oxford is the earliest moment at which we find a definite notice of his metrical studies. The Baroccian collection in the Bodleian Library contains some manuscripts of the Greek ‘Handbook of Metres’ which has come down under the name of the grammarian Hephaestion. Bentley now collated these, using a copy of the edition of Turnebus, in which he made some marginal notes; the book is in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge.

When Bentley was thirty-six, he could still say, ‘I have never published anything yet, but at the desire of others.’ Before he left Oxford, towards the end of 1690, a friend had already engaged him to appear in print. The Baroccian collection of manuscripts contained the only known copy of a chronicle written in Greek by a certain John of Antioch. He is sometimes called John Malelas, or simply Malelas. This is the Greek form of a Syriac surname similar in import to the Greek *rhetor*,—

‘orator,’ ‘eloquent writer.’ It was given to other literary men also, and merely served to distinguish this John of Antioch from other well-known men of the same name and place. His date is uncertain, but may probably be placed between the seventh and tenth centuries. His chronicle is a work of the kind which was often undertaken by Christian compilers. Beginning from the creation, he sought to give a chronological sketch of universal history down to his own time. The work, as extant, is incomplete. It begins with a statement characteristic of its general contents;—‘After the death of Hephaestus (Vulcan), his son Helius (the Sun) reigned over the Egyptians for the space of 4407 days;’—and it breaks off at the year 560 A.D., five years before the death of Justinian. Historically it is worthless, except in so far as it preserves a few notices by writers contemporary with the later emperors; and it has no merit of form. Scaliger once described a similar chronicle as a dust-bin. Yet the mass of rubbish accumulated by John of Antioch includes a few fragments of better things. Not only the classical prose-writers but the classical poets were among his authorities, for he made no attempt to discriminate facts from myths. In several places he preserves the names of lost works. Here and there, too, a bit of classical prose or verse has stuck in the dismal swamp of his text. Eager to reconstruct ancient chronology, the students of the seventeenth century had not overlooked this unattractive author. In the reign of Charles I. two Oxford scholars had successively studied him. John Gregory (who died in 1646) had proved the authorship of the chronicle—mutilated though it was at both ends—by showing that a passage of it is elsewhere quoted as from the chronicle of Malelas. Edmund Chilmead,—a man

remarkable for his attainments in scholarship, mathematics, and music,—translated it into Latin, adding notes. As a royalist, Chilmead was ejected from Christ Church by the Parliamentary Visitation of 1648. He died in 1653, just as his work was ready to be printed. After the lapse of thirty-eight years, the Curators of the Sheldonian Press resolved in 1690 to edit it. The manuscript chronicle had already gained some repute through the citations of it by such scholars as Selden, Usher, Pearson, Stanley, Lloyd. It was arranged that an introduction should be written by Humphrey Hody, who had been James Stillingfleet's College tutor at Wadham, and had, like Bentley, been appointed Chaplain to the Bishop of Worcester. He was an excellent scholar, and performed his task in a highly creditable manner. A general supervision of the edition had been entrusted to Dr John Mill, Principal of St Edmund Hall, whose learning has an abiding monument in his subsequent edition of the New Testament. One day Mill and Bentley were walking together at Oxford, when the conversation turned on the chronicle of Malelas. Bentley said that he would like to see the book before it was published. Mill consented, on condition that Bentley would communicate any suggestions that might occur to him. The proof-sheets were then sent to Bentley; who shortly afterwards left Oxford, to take up his residence as chaplain with the Bishop of Worcester.

Dr Mill presently claimed Bentley's promise; and, thus urged, Bentley at length sent his remarks on Malelas, in the form of a Latin Letter addressed to Dr Mill. He elsewhere says that he had been further pressed to write it by the learned Bishop Lloyd. In June, 1691, the chronicle appeared, with Bentley's Letter to Mill

as an appendix. This edition ('Oxonii, e Theatro Sheldoniano') is a moderately thick octavo volume; first stands a note by Hody, on the spelling of the chronicler's surname; then his Prolegomena, filling 64 pages; the Greek text follows, with Chilmead's Latin version in parallel columns, and foot-notes; and the last 98 pages are occupied by Bentley's Letter to Mill.

Briefly observing that he leaves to Hody the question of the chronicler's identity and age, Bentley comes at once to the text. Malelas had treated Greek mythology as history, interweaving it with other threads of ancient record. Thus, after enumerating some fabulous kings of Attica, he proceeds: 'Shortly afterwards, Gideon was leader of Israel. Contemporary with him was the famous lyric poet Orpheus, of Thrace.' Malelas then quotes some statements as to the mystic theology taught by Orpheus. One of these is a sentence which, as he gives it, seems to be composed of common words, but is wholly unintelligible. Bentley takes up this sentence. He shows that the deeply corrupted words conceal the names of three mystic divinities in the later Orphic system, symbolical, respectively, of *Counsel*, *Light*, and *Life*. He proves this emendation, as certain as it is wonderful, by quoting a passage from Damascius,—the last great Neoplatonist, who lived in the early part of the sixth century, and wrote a treatise called 'Questions and Answers on First Principles,' in which he sketches the theology of 'the current Orphic rhapsodies.' This treatise was not even partially printed till 1828; and Bentley quotes it from a manuscript in the library of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He next deals with a group of fictitious 'oracles' which Malelas had reduced from hexameter verse into prose of the common dialect, and shows that several of them closely



resemble some which he had found in a manuscript at Oxford, entitled 'Oracles and Theologies of Greek Philosophers.'

Then he turns to those passages in which the chronicle cites the Attic dramatists. He demonstrates the spuriousness of a fragment ascribed to Sophocles. He confirms or corrects the titles of several lost plays which Malelas ascribes to Euripides, and incidentally amends numerous passages which he has occasion to quote. Discursive exuberance of learning characterises the whole Letter. A single example will serve to illustrate it. Malelas says: 'Euripides brought out a play about Pasiphaë.' Bentley remarks on this: 'I do not speak at random; and I am certain that *no* ancient writer mentions a Pasiphaë of Euripides.' The comic poet Alcaeus, indeed, composed a piece of that name, which is said to have been exhibited in the same year as the recast *Plutus* of Aristophanes. It is true, however, Bentley adds, that the *story* of Pasiphaë had been handled by Euripides, in a lost play called *The Cretans*. This he proves from a scholiast on the *Frogs* of Aristophanes. But the scholiast himself needs correction: who says that Euripides introduced Aeropè in *The Cretans*. Here he is confounding *The Cretans* with another lost play of Euripides, called the *Women of Crete*: the former dealt with the story of Icarus and Pasiphaë, the latter with that of Aeropè, Atreus and Thyestes. Porphyry, in his book on Abstinence, quotes nine verses from a play of Euripides, in which the chorus are addressing Minos. Grotius, in his Excerpts from Greek Comedies and Tragedies, had attempted to amend these corrupted verses, and had supposed them to come from the *Women of Crete*. Bentley (incidentally correcting a grammarian) demon-



strates that they can have belonged only to *The Cretans*. He then turns to the Greek verses themselves. Grotius had given a Latin version of them, in the same metre. This metre was the anapæstic—one which had been frequently used by the scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, both in translations and in original poems. Bentley points out that one of its most essential laws had been ignored, not only by Grotius, but by the modern Latinists generally, including Joseph Scaliger. The ancients regarded the verses of this metre as forming a continuous chain; hence the last syllable of a verse was not indifferently long or short, but necessarily one or the other, as if it occurred in the middle of a verse. Thus Grotius had written:—

Quas prisca domos dedit indigena  
Quercus Chalyba secta bipenni.

Here the short *a* at the end of *indigena* should be a long syllable, in order to make an anapæst (∪∪—). This is known as Bentley's discovery of the *synaphea* ('*connection*') in anapæstic verse. He further illustrates the metre from fragments of the Latin poet Attius,—which he amends; one fragment, indeed, he recognises in the prose of Cicero's *Tusculans*. Returning to the fragment of *The Cretans* in Porphyry, which Grotius had handled amiss, Bentley corrects it,—with certainty in some points, with rashness in others, but everywhere brilliantly. Nor has he done with the verses yet. They mention the *cypress* as 'native' to Crete. This leads Bentley to discuss and amend passages in Pliny's Natural History, in the History of Plants by Theophrastus, and in the geographical work of Solinus.

Elsewhere Malelas refers to the lost *Meleager* of Euripides. Having quoted another mention of it from

Hesychius, Bentley takes occasion to show at length the principal causes of error in that lexicon. This is one of the most striking parts of the Letter. Then, in numerous places, he restores proper names which Malelas had defaced. The chronicler says that the earliest dramatists were Themis, Minos, and Auleas. Bentley shows that he means Thespis, Ion of Chios, and Aeschylus. Thespis leads him to quote Clement of Alexandria, and to explain some mysterious words by showing that they are specimens of a pastime which consisted in framing a sentence with the twenty-four letters of the alphabet, each used once only. Speaking of Ion, he gives an exhaustive discussion of that poet's date and writings, verse and prose. The Letter ends with some remarks on the form of the name *Malelas*. Hody had found fault with Bentley for adding the final *s*, which no previous scholar used. Bentley replies that *a* at the end of a foreign name ordinarily became *as* in Greek,—as *Agrippas*. And Malelas being the Greek form of a Greek writer's name, we should keep it in Latin and English, just as Cicero says *Lysias*, not *Lysia*. The Latin exceptions are the domesticated names,—those of slaves, or of Greeks naturalised by residence: as *Sosia*, *Phania*. But it was objected that *Malela* was a 'barbarian' name, and therefore indeclinable. Bentley answers that the Hun Attila appears in Greek writers as *Attilas*,—adding half-a-dozen Huns, Goths, and Vandals. The prejudice in favour of *Malela* arose from a simple cause. The chronicler is mentioned only thrice by Greek writers: two of these three passages happen to have the name in the genitive case, which is *Malela*; the third, however, has the nominative, which is *Malelas*. Mr Hody was not convinced about the *s*. The note—in four large pages of small

print—which precedes his Prolegomena was written after he had read Bentley's argument; and ends with a prayer. Mr Hody's aspiration is that *he* may always write in a becoming spirit; and, finally, that he may be a despiser of trifles (*nugarum denique contemptor*).

Taken as a whole, Bentley's Letter to Mill is an extraordinary performance for a scholar of twenty-eight in the year 1690. It ranges from one topic to another over almost the whole field of ancient literature. Upwards of sixty Greek and Latin writers, from the earliest to the latest, are incidentally explained or corrected. There are many curious tokens of the industry with which Bentley had used his months at Oxford. Thus, referring to a manuscript of uncertain origin in the Bodleian Library, 'I have made out,' he says, 'from some iambics at the beginning,—almost effaced by age—that it contains the work of the grammarian Theognotus, whom the author of the *Etymologicum Magnum* quotes several times;' and he gives his proof.

It is interesting to see how strongly this first production bears the stamp of that peculiar style which afterwards marked Bentley's criticism. It is less the style of a writer than of a speaker who is arguing in a strain of rough vivacity with another person. The tone is often as if the ancient author was reading his composition aloud to Bentley, but making stupid mistakes through drowsiness or inattention. Bentley pulls him up short; remonstrates with him in a vein of good-humoured sarcasm; points out to him that he can scarcely mean *this*, but—as his own words elsewhere prove—must, no doubt, have meant *that*; and recommends him to think more of logic. Sometimes it is the modern reader whom Bentley addresses, as if begging him to be calm in

the face of some tremendous blunder just committed by the ancient author, who is intended to overhear the 'aside:'—'Do not mind him; he does not really mean it. He is like this sometimes, and makes us anxious; but he has plenty of good sense, if one can only get at it. Let us see what we can do for him.' This colloquial manner, with its alternating appeals to author and reader, in one instance exposed Bentley to an unmerited rebuke from Dr Monk. Once, after triumphantly showing that John of Antioch supposed the Boeotian Aulis to be in Scythia, Bentley exclaims, '*Good indeed, Johnny!*' (Euge vero, ὦ Ἰωαννίδιον). Dr Monk thought that this was said to Dr John Mill, and reprov'd it as 'an indecorum which neither the familiarity of friendship, nor the license of a dead language, can justify towards the dignified Head of a House.' Mr Maehly, in a memoir of Bentley, rejoins: 'That may be the view of English high life; a German savant would never have been offended by the expressions in question.' (Das mag Anschauung des englischen *high life* sein: einem deutschen Gelehrten würden die fraglichen Ausdrücke nie aufgefallen sein.) But our Aristarchus was not addressing the Principal of St Edmund Hall; he was sportively upbraiding the ancient chronicler. Indeed, Monk's slip—a thing most rare in his work—was pointed out in a review of his first edition, and is absent from the second.

Two of the first scholars of that day—John George Graevius and Ezechiël Spanheim—separately saluted the young author of the Letter to Mill as 'a new and already bright star' of English letters. But the Letter to Mill received by far its most memorable tribute, years after Bentley's death, from David Ruhnken, in his preface to the Hesychius of Alberti. 'Those great men,' he says—

meaning such scholars as Scaliger, Casaubon, Saumaise —‘did not dare to say openly what they thought (about Hesychius),—whether deterred by the established repute of the grammarian, or by the clamours of the half-learned, who are always noisy against their betters, and who were uneasy at the notion of the great Hesychius losing his pre-eminence. In order that the truth should be published and proved, we needed the learned daring of Richard Bentley,—daring which here, if anywhere, served literature better than the sluggish and credulous superstition of those who wish to be called and deemed critics. Bentley shook off the servile yoke, and put forth that famous *Letter to Mill*,—a wonderful monument of genius and learning, such as could have come only from the first critic of his time.’



## CHAPTER II.

### THE BOYLE LECTURES.

ROBERT BOYLE, born in the year after Bacon's death (1627), stands next to him among the Englishmen of the seventeenth century who advanced inductive science. His experiments—'physico-mechanical,' as he describes them—led to the discovery of the law for the elasticity of the air; improvements in the air-pump and the thermometer were due to him; and his investigations were serviceable to Hydrostatics, Chemistry, and Medicine. In his theological writings it was his chief aim to show 'the reconcilableness of reason and religion,' and thus to combat the most powerful prejudice which opposed the early progress of the New Philosophy. Boyle's mind, like Newton's, became more profoundly reverent the further he penetrated into the secrets of nature; his innermost feeling appears to be well represented by the title which he chose for one of his essays—'On the high veneration man's intellect owes to God, peculiarly for his wisdom and power.' Thus his 'Disquisition on Final Causes' was designed to prove, as against inferences which had been drawn from the cosmical system of Descartes, that the structure of the universe reveals the work of a divine

intelligence. Dying on December 30, 1691, he left a bequest which was in harmony with the main purpose of his life, and which might be regarded as his personal and permanent protest against the idea that a servant of science is an enemy of religion.

He assigned fifty pounds a year as a stipend 'for some divine, or preaching minister,' who should 'preach eight Sermons in the year for proving the Christian religion against notorious infidels, viz. Atheists, Deists, Pagans, Jews, and Mahometans; *not descending to any controversies that are among Christians themselves*: The lectures to be on the first Monday of the respective months of January, February, March, April, May, September, October, November; in such church as the trustees shall from time to time appoint.' The four trustees named in the will—Bishop Tenison, Sir Henry Ashurst, Sir John Rotheram, and John Evelyn (the author of the *Sylva* and the *Diary*)—soon appointed the Lecturer who was to deliver the first course. 'We made choice of one Mr Bentley,' says Evelyn,—'chaplain to the Bishop of Worcester.' Bishop Stillingfleet, himself so eminent an apologist, would naturally be consulted in such an election.

Bentley took for his subject the first of the topics indicated by the founder:—'A confutation of Atheism.' At this time the *Leviathan* of Thomas Hobbes had been forty years before the world: and Bentley's lectures stand in a peculiar relation to it. Hobbes resolved all ideas into sensations; he denied that there was 'any common rule of good and evil, to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves.' He did *not*, however, deny the existence of a God. 'Curiosity about causes,' says Hobbes, 'led men to search out, one after the other, till they came to the

necessary conclusion, that there is some eternal cause which men called God. But they have no more idea of his nature than a blind man has of fire, though he knows that there is something which warms him.' So elsewhere he distinguishes between the necessary 'acknowledgment of one infinite, omnipotent and eternal God,' and the attempt—which he pronounces delusive—to define the nature of that Being 'by spirit incorporeal.'

Bentley held with those who regarded Hobbes, not merely as a materialist who destroyed the basis of morality, but as an atheist in the disguise of a deist. Writing to Bernard, Bentley says roundly of Hobbes, 'his corporeal God is a meer sham to get his book printed.' Hobbes had said—not in the *Leviathan*, but in 'An Answer to Bishop Bramhall,' who had pressed him on this point—'I maintain God's existence, and that he is a most pure and most simple *corporeal spirit*:' adding, 'by corporeal I mean a substance that has magnitude.' Elsewhere he adds '*invisible*' before 'corporeal.' But at this time the suspicion of a tendency was sometimes enough to provoke the charge of atheism: thus Cudworth, in his *Intellectual System*—published fourteen years before Bentley's lectures, and, like them, directed mainly against Hobbes—casts the imputation, without a shadow of reason, on Gassendi, Descartes, and Bacon. Bentley declared that atheism was rife in 'taverns and coffee-houses, nay Westminster-hall and the very churches.' The school of Hobbes, he was firmly persuaded, was answerable for this. 'There may be some Spinosists, or immaterial Fatalists, beyond seas,' says Bentley; 'but not one English infidel in a hundred is any other than a Hobbist; which I know to be rank atheism in the private study and select conversation of

those men, whatever it may appear abroad.' Bentley's Lectures are, throughout, essentially an argument against Hobbes. The set of the lecturer's thoughts may be seen from an illustration used in his second discourse, where he is arguing against a fortuitous origin of the universe. 'If a man should affirm that an ape, casually meeting with pen, ink, and paper, and falling to scribble, did happen to write exactly the *Leviathan* of Thomas Hobbes, would an atheist believe such a story?'

It was from the pulpit of St Martin's Church, in London, that Bentley delivered his Boyle Lectures. The first was given on March 7, 1692. Bentley announces that his refutation of atheists will not be drawn from those sacred books which, in their eyes, possess no special authority; 'but, however, there are other books extant, which they must needs allow of as proper evidence; even the mighty volumes of visible nature, and the everlasting tables of right reason; wherein, if they do not wilfully shut their eyes, they may read their own folly written by the finger of God, in a much plainer and more terrible sentence than Belshazzar's was by the hand upon the wall.'

In choosing this ground Bentley was following a recent example. Richard Cumberland, afterwards Bishop of Peterborough, had published in 1672 his 'Philosophical Disquisition on the Laws of Nature'—arguing, against the school of Hobbes, that certain immutable principles of moral choice are inherent in the nature of things and in the mind of man. He purposely refrains, however, from appealing to Scripture: the testimony which Cumberland invokes is that of recent science, mathematical or physiological,—of Descartes and Huygens, of Willis or Harvey. It is characteristic of Bentley that

he chose to draw his weapons from the same armoury. He was already a disciple of strictly theological learning. But in this field, as in others, he declined to use authority as a refuge from logical encounter.

Bentley's first Lecture argues that to adopt atheism is 'to choose death and evil before life and good;' that such folly is needless, since religion imposes nothing repugnant to man's faculties or incredible to his reason; that it is also hurtful, both to the individual, whom it robs of the best hope, and to communities, since religion is the basis of society. The second Lecture proceeds to deduce the existence of the Deity from the faculties of the human soul. Hobbes had said: 'There is no conception in a man's mind which hath not at first, totally or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of sense: the rest are derived from that original.' Bentley, on the contrary, undertakes to prove that 'the powers of cogitation, and volition, and sensation, are neither inherent in matter as such, nor producible in matter;' but proceed from 'some cogitative substance, some incorporeal inhabitant within us, which we call spirit and soul.' As the result of the inquiry, he concludes that there is 'an immaterial and intelligent Being, that created our souls; which Being was either eternal itself, or created immediately or ultimately by some other Eternal, that has all those perfections. There is, therefore, originally an eternal, immaterial, intelligent Creator; all which together are the attributes of God alone.' Evelyn, who was present at this Lecture, writes of it in his *Diary* (April 4, 1692)—'*one of the most learned and convincing discourses I had ever heard.*' From this point we may date the friendship which till his death in 1706 he steadily entertained for Bentley. The third, fourth and fifth Lectures



urge the same inference from the origin and structure of human bodies. Bentley seeks to prove that 'the human race was neither from everlasting without beginning; nor owes its beginning to the influence of heavenly bodies; nor to what they call nature, that is, the necessary and mechanical motions of dead senseless matter.' His style of argument on the evidence of design in the human structure may be seen from this passage on the organism of the heart:—

'If we consider the heart, which is supposed to be the first principle of motion and life, and divide it by our imagination into its constituent parts, its arteries, and veins, and nerves, and tendons, and membranes, and innumerable little fibres that these secondary parts do consist of, we shall find nothing here singular, but what is in any other muscle of the body. 'Tis only the site and posture of these several parts, and the configuration of the whole, that give it the form and functions of a heart. Now, why should the first single fibres in the formation of the heart be peculiarly drawn in spiral lines, when the fibres of all other muscles are made by a transverse rectilinear motion? What could determine the fluid matter into that odd and singular figure, when as yet no other member is supposed to be formed, that might direct the course of that fluid matter? Let mechanism here make an experiment of its power, and produce a spiral and turbinated motion of the whole moved body without an external director.'

The last three Lectures (vi., vii., viii.) deal with the proofs from 'the origin and frame of the world.' These are by far the most striking of the series. Newton's *Principia* had now been published for five years. But, beyond the inner circle of scientific students, the

Cartesian system was still generally received. Descartes taught that each planet was carried round the sun in a separate vortex; and that the satellites are likewise carried round by smaller vortices, contained within those of the several planets. Centrifugal motion would constantly impel the planets to fly off in a straight line from the sun; but they are kept in their orbits by the pressure of an outer sphere, consisting of denser particles which are beyond the action of the vortices.

Newton had demolished this theory. He had shown that the planets are held in their orbits by the force of *gravity*, which is always drawing them towards the sun, combined with a *transverse impulse*, which is always projecting them at tangents to their orbits. Bentley takes up Newton's great discovery, and applies it to prove the existence of an Intelligent Providence. Let us grant, he says, that the force of gravity is inherent to matter. What can have been the origin of that other force,—the transverse impulse? This impulse is not uniform, but has been adjusted to the place of each body in the system. Each planet has its particular velocity, proportioned to its distance from the sun and to the quantity of the solar matter. It can be due to one cause alone—an intelligent and omnipotent Creator.

This view has the express sanction of Newton. His letters to Bentley—subsequent in date to the Lectures—repeatedly confirm it. 'I do not know any power in nature,' Newton writes, 'which would cause this transverse motion without the divine arm.'... 'To make this system, with all its motions, required a cause which understood and compared together the quantities of matter in the several bodies of the sun and planets, and the gravitating powers resulting from thence; the

several distances of the primary planets from the sun, and of the secondary ones from Saturn, Jupiter, and the Earth; and the velocities with which these planets could revolve about those quantities of matter in the central bodies; and to compare and adjust all these things together, in so great a variety of bodies, argues that cause to be, not blind and fortuitous, but very well skilled in mechanics and geometry.'

The application of Newton's discoveries which Bentley makes in the Boyle Lectures was peculiarly welcome to Newton himself. 'When I wrote my treatise about our system,' he says to Bentley, 'I had an eye upon such principles as might work with considering men for the belief of a Deity; and nothing can rejoice me more than to find it useful for that purpose. But if I have done the public any service this way, it is due to nothing but industry and patient thought.'

The correspondence between Bentley and Newton, to which the Boyle Lectures gave rise, would alone make them memorable. It has commonly been supposed that Bentley first studied the *Principia* with a view to these Lectures. This, as I can prove, is an error. The Library of Trinity College, Cambridge, contains the autographs of Newton's four letters to Bentley, and of his directions for reading the *Principia*; also a letter to Wotton from John Craig, a Scottish mathematician, giving advice on the same subject, for Bentley's benefit. Now, Craig's letter is dated June 24, 1691; Bentley, then, must have turned his mind to the *Principia* six months before the Boyle Lectures were even founded. We know, further, that in 1689 he was working on Lucretius. I should conjecture, then, that his first object in studying Newton's cosmical system

had been to compare it with that of Epicurus, as interpreted by Lucretius; to whom, indeed, he refers more than once in the Boyle Lectures. Craig gives an alarming list of books which must be read before the *Principia* can be understood, and represents the study as most arduous. Newton's own directions to Bentley are simple and encouraging: 'at y<sup>e</sup> first perusal of my Book,' he concludes, 'it's enough if you understand y<sup>e</sup> Propositions w<sup>th</sup> some of y<sup>e</sup> Demonstrations w<sup>ch</sup> are easier than the rest. For when you understand y<sup>e</sup> easier, they will afterwards give you light into y<sup>e</sup> harder.' At the bottom of the paper Bentley has written, in his largest and boldest character, '*Directions from Mr Newton by his own Hand.*' There is no date. Clearly, however, it was Craig's formidable letter which determined Bentley on writing to Newton. The rapidity with which Bentley—among all his other pursuits—comprehended the *Principia* proves both industry and power. Some years later, his Lectures were searched for flaws by John Keill, afterwards Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford, and the principal agent in introducing Newton's system there. The Phalaris controversy was going on, and Keill wished to damage Bentley. But he could find only one real blot. Bentley had missed Newton's discovery—mentioned, but not prominent, in the *Principia*—that the moon revolves about her own axis. Keill's only other point was a verbal cavil, refuted by the context. Better testimony to Bentley's accuracy could scarcely have been borne.

The last Lecture was given on December 5, 1692. The first six had already been printed. But before publishing the last two—which dealt in more detail with Newton's principles—Bentley wished to consult Newton



himself. He therefore wrote to him, at Trinity College, Cambridge. It was in the autumn of that year that Newton had finished his Letters on Fluxions. He was somewhat out of health, suffering from sleeplessness and loss of appetite; perhaps (as his letters to Locke suggest) vexed by the repeated failure of his friends to obtain for him such a provision as he desired. But he at once answered Bentley's letter with that concise and lucid thoroughness which makes his style a model in its kind. His first letter is dated Dec. 10, 1692, and addressed to Bentley 'at the Bishop of Worcester's House, in Park-Street in Westminster.' On the back of it Bentley has written:—'Mr Newton's Answer to some Queries sent by me, after I had preach't my 2 last Sermons; All his answers are agreeable to what I had deliver'd before in the pulpit. But of some incidental things I do ἐπέχειν [suspend judgment]. R.B.' Three other letters are extant which Newton wrote at this time to Bentley,—the last, on Feb. 25, 1693. He probably wrote others also; there are several from Bentley to him in the Portsmouth collection.

In the course of these four letters, Newton approves nearly all the arguments for the existence of God which Bentley had deduced from the *Principia*. On one important point, however, he corrects him. Bentley had conceded to the atheists that gravity may be essential and inherent to matter. 'Pray,' says Newton, 'do not ascribe that notion to me; for the cause of gravity is what I do not pretend to know, and therefore would take more time to consider of it.' In the last letter, about five weeks later, Newton returns to this topic, and speaks more decidedly. The notion of gravity being inherent to matter 'is to me,' he says, 'so great an



absurdity, that I believe no man, who has in philosophical matters any competent faculty of thinking, can ever fall into it. Gravity must be caused by an agent acting constantly according to certain laws; but whether this agent be material or immaterial, I have left to the consideration of my readers.'

One of the most interesting points in these letters is to see how a mind like Bentley's, so wonderfully acute in certain directions, and logical in criticism even to excess, is corrected by a mathematical mind. Thus Bentley, in writing to Newton, had argued that every particle of matter in an infinite space has an infinite quantity of matter on all sides, and consequently an infinite attraction every way; it must therefore rest in equilibrium, all infinites being equal. Now, says Newton, by similar reasoning we might prove that an inch is equal to a foot. For, if an inch may be divided into an infinite number of parts, the sum of those parts will be an inch; and if a foot may be divided into an infinite number of parts, the sum of those parts must be a foot; and therefore, since all infinites are equal, those sums must be equal; that is, an inch must be equal to a foot. The logic is strict; what, then, is the error in the premises? The position, Newton answers, that all infinites are equal. Infinites may be considered in two ways. Viewed absolutely, they are neither equal nor unequal. But when considered under certain definite restrictions, as mathematics may consider them, they can be compared. 'A mathematician would tell you that, though there be an infinite number of infinite little parts in an inch, yet there is twelve times that number of such parts in a foot.' And so Bentley's infinite attracting forces must be so conceived as if the

addition of the slightest finite attracting force to either would destroy the equilibrium.

Johnson has observed that these letters show 'how even the mind of Newton gains ground gradually upon darkness : ' a fine remark, but one which will convey an incorrect impression if it is supposed to mean that Bentley's questions had led Newton to modify or extend any doctrine set forth in the *Principia*. Bentley's present object in using the *Principia* was to refute atheism. Newton had not previously considered all the possible applications of his own discoveries to the purposes of theological controversy. This is the limit to the novelty of suggestion which he found in Bentley's letters. Besides the few cases in which Newton points out a fallacy, there are others in which he puts a keener edge on some argument propounded by his correspondent. For instance, Bentley had submitted some reasons against 'the hypothesis of deriving the frame of the world by mechanical principles from matter evenly spread through the heavens.' This was one of the theories which sought to eliminate the necessity of an intelligent cause. It was, of course, radically incompatible with Newton's system. 'I had considered it very little,' Newton writes, 'before your letters put me upon it.' But then he goes on to point out how it may be urned against its authors. It involves the assumption that gravity is inherent to matter. But, if this is so, then matter could never have been evenly spread through the heavens, without the intervention of a supernatural power.

Newton's letters, while they heighten our admiration for the master, also illustrate the great ability of the disciple,—his strong grasp of a subject which lay beyond the sphere of his familiar studies, and his vigorous

originality in the use of new acquisitions. Bentley's Boyle Lectures have a lasting worth which is independent of their scientific value as an argument. In regard to the latter, it may be observed that they bear the mark of their age in their limited conception of a natural law as distinguished from a personal agency. Thus gravitation is allowed as a natural 'law' because its action is constant and uniform. But wherever there is a more and a less, wherever the operation is apparently variable, this is explained by the intervening will of an intelligent person ; it is not conceived that the disturbing or modifying force may be another, though unknown, 'law,' in the sense in which that name is given to a manifestly regular sequence of cause and effect. On their literary side, the best parts of the Lectures exhibit Bentley as a born controversialist, and the worst as a born litigant. The latter character appears in an occasional tendency to hair-splitting and quibbling ; the former, in his sustained power of terse and animated reasoning, in rapid thrust and alert defence, in ready command of various resources, in the avoidance of declamation while he is proving his point, and in the judicious use of eloquence to clinch it. Here, as elsewhere, he has the knack of illustrating an abstruse subject by an image from common things. He is touching (in the second Lecture) on the doctrine of Epicurus that our freedom of will is due to the declension of atoms from the perpendicular as they fall through infinite space. 'Tis as if one should say that a bowl equally poised, and thrown upon a plain and smooth bowling-green, will run necessarily and fatally in a direct motion ; but if it be made with a bias, that may decline it a little from a straight line, it may acquire by that motion

a liberty of will, and so run spontaneously to the jack.' It may be noticed that a passage in the eighth Lecture is one of the quaintest testimonies in literature to the comparatively recent origin of a taste for the grander forms of natural scenery. Bentley supposes his adversaries to object that 'the rugged and irregular surface' of the earth refutes its claim to be 'a work of divine artifice.' 'We ought not to believe,' he replies, 'that the banks of the ocean are really deformed, because they have not the form of a regular bulwark; nor that the mountains are out of shape, because they are not exact pyramids or cones.'

The Lectures made a deep and wide impression. Soon after they had been published, a Latin version appeared at Berlin. A Dutch version subsequently came out at Utrecht. There was one instance, indeed, of dissent from the general approval. A Yorkshire squire wrote a pamphlet, intimating that his own experience did not lead him to consider the faculties of the human soul as a decisive argument for the existence of a Deity; and, referring to Bentley's observations on this head, he remarked, 'I judge he hath taken the wrong sow by the ear.' In 1694 Bentley again delivered a course of Boyle Lectures—'A Defence of Christianity'—but they were never printed. Manuscript copies of them are mentioned by Kippis, the editor of the *Biographia Britannica* (1780): but Dean Vincent, who died in 1815, is reported by Kidd as believing that they were lost.

## CHAPTER III.

### LEARNED CORRESPONDENCE.—THE KING'S LIBRARIAN.

IN 1692—the year of his first Boyle Lecturership—an accident placed Bentley in correspondence with John George Graevius, a German who held a professorship at Utrecht, and stood in the front rank of classical—especially Latin—scholarship. When Bentley was seeking materials for an edition of Manilius, he received a box of papers from Sir Edward Sherburn, an old cavalier who had partly translated the poet. The papers in the box, bought at Antwerp, had belonged to the Dutch scholar, Gaspar Gevarts. Among them was a Latin tract by Albert Rubens ('Rubenius'), the author of another treatise which Graevius had previously edited. Bentley, with Sherburn's leave, sent the newly-found tract to Graevius, who published it in 1694, with a dedication to Bentley. This circumstance afterwards brought on Bentley the absurd charge of having intercepted an honour due to Sherburn.

Graevius was rejoiced to open a correspondence with the author of the Letter to Mill, which he had warmly admired. The professor's son had lately died, leaving an unpublished edition of the Greek poet



Callimachus, which Graevius was now preparing to edit. He applied to Bentley for any literary aid that he could give. In reply, Bentley undertook to collect the fragments of Callimachus, scattered up and down throughout Greek literature; remarking that he could promise to double the number printed in a recent Paris edition, and also to improve the text. In 1696 Bentley fulfilled this promise by sending to Graevius a collection of about 420 fragments; also a new recension of the poet's epigrams, with additions to their number from a fresh manuscript source, and with some notes on the hymns. The edition appeared at Utrecht in 1697, with Bentley's contributions.

In the preface Graevius shows his sense that the work done by Bentley—'that new and brilliant light of Britain'—was not merely excellent in quality, but of a new order. Such indeed it was. Since then, successive generations have laboured at collecting and sifting the fragments of the Greek poets. But in 1697 the world had no example of systematic work in this field. The first pattern of thorough treatment and the first model of critical method were furnished by Bentley's Callimachus. Hitherto the collector of fragments had aimed at little more than heaping together 'the limbs of the dismembered poet.' Bentley shows how these limbs, when they have been gathered, may serve, within certain limits, to reconstruct the body. Starting from a list of the poet's works, extant or known by title, he aims at arranging the fragments under those works to which they severally belonged. But, while he concentrates his critical resources in a methodical manner, he wisely refrains from pushing conjecture too far. His Callimachus is hardly more distinguished by brilliancy than by cautious judgment; praise which could not be given

to all his later works. Here, as in the Letter to Mill, we see his metrical studies bearing fruit: thus he points out a fact which had hitherto escaped even such scholars as Saumaise and Casaubon,—that the Greek diphthongs *ai* and *oi* cannot be shortened before consonants. Ernesti, in the preface to his *Callimachus* (1763), speaks of Bentley as ‘having distanced competition:’ and another estimate, of yet higher authority, is expressed more strongly still. ‘Nothing more excellent in its kind has appeared,’ said Valckenaer,—‘nothing more highly finished;’ ‘a most thorough piece of work, by which writers who respect their readers might well be deterred’ from an attempt at rivalry. It is no real abatement of Bentley’s desert that a few gleanings were left for those who came after him. Here, as in some other cases, the distinctive merit of his work is not that it was final but that it was exemplary. In this particular department—the editing of fragments—he differed from his predecessors as the numismatist, who arranges a cabinet of coins, differs from the digger who is only aware that he has unearthed an old bit of gold or silver.

Meanwhile letters had been passing between Bentley and a correspondent very unlike Graevius. In 1693 Joshua Barnes, of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, was editing Euripides, and wrote to Bentley, asking his reasons for an opinion attributed to him,—that the ‘Letters of Euripides’ were spurious. Bentley gave these reasons in a long and courteous reply. Barnes, however, resented the loss of a cherished illusion. Not only did he omit to thank Bentley, but in the preface to his *Euripides* (1694) he alluded to his correspondent’s opinion as ‘a proof of effrontery or incapacity.’ Barnes is a curious figure, half-comic half-pathetic, among the

minor persons of Bentley's story. Widely read, incessantly laborious, but uncritical and vain, he poured forth a continual stream of injudicious publications, English or Greek, until, when he was fifty-one, they numbered forty-three. The last work of his life was an elaborate edition of Homer. He had invested the fortune of Mrs Barnes in this costly enterprise,—obtaining her somewhat reluctant consent, it was said, by representing the *Iliad* as the work of King Solomon. Queen Anne declined the dedication, and nothing could persuade poor Barnes that this was not Bentley's doing. Bentley said of Barnes that he probably knew about as much Greek, and understood it about as well, as an Athenian blacksmith. The great critic appears to have forgotten that Sophocles and Aristophanes were appreciated by audiences which represented the pit and the gallery much more largely than the boxes and the stalls. An Athenian blacksmith could teach us a good many things.

Bentley had now made his mark, and he had powerful friends. One piece of preferment after another came to him. In 1692 Bishop Stillingfleet procured for him a prebendal stall at Worcester, and three years later appointed him to hold the Rectory of Hartlebury, in that county, until James Stillingfleet should be in full orders. At the end of the year 1693 the office of Royal Librarian became vacant. By an arrangement which was not then thought singular, the new Librarian was induced to resign in favour of Bentley, who was to pay him £130 a year out of the salary of £200. The patent appointing Bentley Keeper of the Royal Libraries bore date April 12, 1694. The 'Licensing Act' (Stat. 13 and 14, Car. II.) finally expired in 1694, a few months

after Bentley took office. But he made the most of his time. The Act reserved three copies of every book printed in England,—one for the Royal Library, one for Oxford, and one for Cambridge. Latterly it had been evaded. Bentley applied to the Master of the Stationers' Company, and exacted '*near a thousand*' volumes. In this year he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. In 1695 he became a Chaplain in ordinary to the King. Hitherto he had resided with Bishop Stillingfleet: but early in 1696 he took possession of the rooms in St James's Palace which were assigned to the Royal Librarian.

One of his letters to Evelyn—whom he had been helping to revise his *Numismata*, a 'Discourse on Medals, ancient and modern'—discloses an amusing incident. Bentley's lodgings at St James's were next the Earl of Marlborough's. Bentley wished to annex some rooms overhead, for the better bestowal of certain rare books. Marlborough undertook to plead his cause. The result of this obliging diplomacy was that the future hero of Blenheim got 'the closets' for himself. Bentley now became anxious to build a new library, and Evelyn warmly sympathises with his 'glorious enterprise.' It was, indeed, much needed. The books were so ill-lodged that they could not be properly arranged; Bentley declared that the library was 'not fit to be seen;' and he kept its chief treasure, the Alexandrine MS. of the Greek Bible, at his own rooms in the palace, 'for this very reason, that persons might see it without seeing the library.' The Treasury consented to the proposal for building. But public business prevented the bill coming before Parliament, and the scheme was dropped for the time. Meanwhile Bentley's energy found scope at Cambridge. Since the civil troubles, the University



Press had lapsed into a state which called for reparation. Bentley took an active part in procuring subscriptions for that purpose. He was empowered by the University to order new founts of type, which were cast in Holland. Evelyn, in his Diary (Aug. 17, 1696), alludes to 'that noble presse which my worthy and most learned friend.. is with greate charge and industrie erecting now at Cambridge.' In the same year Bentley took the degree of Doctor in Divinity. On Commencement Sunday (July 5, 1696) he preached before the University, taking as his text 1 Pet. iii. 15. The sermon, which is extant, defends Christianity against deism.

It is natural to ask,—was Bentley yet remarked for any of those qualities which form the harsher side of his character in later life? He was now thirty-four. There is the story of the dinner-party at Bishop Stillingfleet's, at which the guest, who had been sitting next Bentley, said to the Bishop after dinner, 'My Lord, that chaplain of yours is certainly a very extraordinary man.' (Mr. Bentley, like the chaplain in 'Esmond,' had doubtless conformed to the usage of the time, and retired when the custards appeared.) 'Yes,' said Stillingfleet, 'had he but the gift of humility, he would be the most extraordinary man in Europe.' If this has a certain flavour of concoction, at any rate there is no doubt as to what Pepys wrote, after reading Boyle's allusion to Bentley's supposed discourtesy. 'I suspect Mr. Boyle is in the right; for our friend's learning (which I have a great value for) wants a little filing.' Against such hints, there is a noteworthy fact to be set. A letter of Bentley's to Evelyn, dated Oct. 21, 1697, mentions that a small group of friends had arranged to meet in the



evenings, once or twice a week, at Bentley's lodgings in St James's. These are the names: John Evelyn, Sir Christopher Wren, John Locke, Isaac Newton. A person with whom such men chose to place themselves in frequent and familiar intercourse must have been distinguished by something else than insolent erudition. But now we must see how Bentley bore himself in the first great crisis of his career.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE CONTROVERSY ON THE LETTERS OF PHALARIS.

WILLIAM WOTTON'S *Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning* (1694) give the best view of a discussion which greatly exercised the wits of the day. 'Soon after the Restauration of King Charles II.,' says Wotton, 'upon the institution of the Royal Society, the comparative excellency of the Old and New Philosophy was eagerly debated in England. But the disputes then managed between Stubbe and Glanville were rather particular, relating to the Royal Society, than general, relating to knowledge in its utmost extent. In France this controversy has been taken up more at large. The French were not content to argue the point in Philosophy and Mathematicks, but even in Poetry and Oratory too; where the Ancients had the general opinion of the learned on their side. Monsieur de Fontenelle, the celebrated author of a Book concerning the Plurality of Worlds, began the dispute about six years ago [1688], in a little Discourse annexed to the *Pastorals*.'

Perrault, going further still than Fontenelle, 'in oratory sets the Bishop of Meaux [Bossuet] against Pericles (or rather Thucydides), the Bishop of Nismes [Fléchier]

against Isocrates, F. Bourdaloue against Lysias, Monsieur Voiture against Pliny, and Monsieur Balzac against Cicero. In Poetry likewise he sets Monsieur Boileau against Horace, Monsieur Corneille and Monsieur Molière against the Ancient Dramatic Poets.'

Sir William Temple, in his 'Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning'—published in 1692, and dedicated to his own University, *Almae Matri Cantabrigiensi*—was not less uncompromising in the opposite direction. His general view is that the Ancients surpassed the Moderns, not merely in art and literature, but also in every branch of science, though the records of their science have perished. 'The Moderns,' Temple adds, 'gather all their learning out of Books in the Universities.' The Ancients, on the contrary, travelled with a view to original research, and advanced the limits of knowledge in their subjects by persistent interviews with reserved specialists in foreign parts. Thales and Pythagoras are Sir William's models in this way. 'Thales acquired his knowledge in Egypt, Phœnicia, Delphos, and Crete; Pythagoras spent twenty-two years in Egypt, and twelve years more in Chaldæa; and then returned laden with all their stores.' Temple's performance was translated into French, and made quite a sensation in the Academy,—receiving, among other tributes, the disinterested homage of the Modern Horace.

Wotton's object was to act as a mediator, and 'give to every side its just due.' As to 'eloquence and poetry,' it required some courage (in England) even to hint that the Moderns had beaten the Ancients. 'It is almost a heresie in wit, among our poets, to set up any modern name against Homer or Virgil, Horace or Terence. So that though here and there one should in Discourse prefer

the writers of the present age, yet scarce any man among us, who sets a value upon his own reputation, will venture to assert it in print.' With regard to science, however, Wotton speaks out, and in a gentle way disposes of the Ancients. He may, in fact, claim the credit of having made a sensible contribution to the discussion. Sir William Temple, 'the ornament of the age,' was no mean antagonist. Wotton must have been glad of a trusty ally, especially on the ground of ancient literature, the strongest part of the enemy's position. Such an ally he found in Bentley. Temple had written thus:—

'It may perhaps be further affirmed, in favour of the Ancients, that the oldest books we have are still in their kind the best. The two most ancient that I know of in prose, among those we call profane authors, are Æsop's Fables and Phalaris's Epistles, both living near the same time, which was that of Cyrus and Pythagoras. As the first has been agreed by all ages since for the greatest master in his kind, and all others of that sort have been but imitations of his original; so I think the Epistles of Phalaris to have more race, more spirit, more force of wit and genius, than any others I have ever seen, either ancient or modern. I know several learned men (or that usually pass for such, under the name of critics) have not esteemed them genuine; and Politian, with some others, have attributed them to Lucian: but I think he must have little skill in painting that cannot find out this to be an original. Such diversity of passions, upon such variety of actions and passages of life and government; such freedom of thought, such boldness of expression; such bounty to his friends, such scorn of his enemies; such honour of learned men, such esteem of good; such knowledge of life, such contempt of death;

with such fierceness of nature and cruelty of revenge, could never be represented but by him that possessed them. And I esteem Lucian to have been no more capable of writing than of acting what Phalaris did. In all one writ you find the scholar or the sophist; in all the other, the tyrant and the commander.'

Mutual admiration and modern journalism have seldom produced a more magnificent advertisement than Sir William Temple had given to this ancient writer. After the slumber, or the doze, of centuries, Phalaris awoke and found himself in demand. The booksellers began to feel an interest in him such as they had never even simulated before.

The 'Epistles of Phalaris' are a collection of a hundred and forty-eight letters,—many of them only a few lines long,—written in 'Attic' Greek of that artificial kind which begins to appear about the time of Augustus. They are first mentioned by a Greek writer, Stobaeus, who flourished about 480 A. D. We know nothing about the exact time at which they were written. On the other hand there is no doubt as to the class of literature which they represent, or the general limits of the period to which they must be assigned. These limits are roughly marked by the first five centuries of the Christian era.

Phalaris, the reputed author of the Letters, is a shadowy figure in the early legends of ancient Sicily. The modern Girgenti, on the south-west coast of the island, preserves the name of Agrigentum, as the Romans called the Greek city of Akragas. Founded early in the sixth century before Christ by a Dorian colony from Gela, Akragas stood on the spacious terraces of a lofty hill. It was a splendid natural stronghold. Steep cliffs were the



city's bulwarks on the south; on the north, a craggy ridge formed a rampart behind it, and the temple-crowned citadel, a precipitous rock, towered to a height of twelve hundred feet above the sea. Story told that Phalaris, a citizen of Akragas, had contrived to seize the citadel, and to make himself absolute ruler of the place,—in Greek phrase, 'tyrant.' He strengthened the city,—then recently founded,—and was successful in wars upon his neighbours. At last his own subjects rose against him, overthrew his power, and put him to death. This latter event is said to have occurred between 560 and 550 B. C. Such was the tradition. All that we really know about Phalaris, however, is that as early as about 500 B. C. his name had become a proverb for horrible cruelty, not only in Sicily, but throughout Hellas. Pindar refers to this in his first Pythian ode (474 B. C.):—'the kindly worth of Croesus fades not; but in every land hate follows the name of *him who burned men in a brazen bull, the ruthless Phalaris.*'

This habit of slowly roasting objectionable persons in a brazen bull was the only definite trait which the Greeks of the classical age associated with Phalaris. And this is the single fact on which Lucian founds his amusing piece, in which envoys from Phalaris offer the bull to the temple of Delphi, and a Delphian casuist urges that it ought to be accepted. The bull may be seen, portrayed by the fancy of a modern artist, in the frontispiece to Charles Boyle's edition of the Letters. The head of the brazen animal is uplifted, as if it was bellowing; one of the tyrant's apparitors is holding up the lid of a large oblong aperture in the bull's left flank; two others are hustling in a wretched man, who has already disappeared, all but his legs. The two servants

wear the peculiar expression of countenance which may be seen on the faces of persons engaged in packing; meanwhile another pair of slaves, with more animated features, are arranging the faggots under the bull, which are already beginning to blaze cheerfully, so that a gentle warmth must be felt on the inner surface of the brass, though it will probably be some minutes yet before it begins to be uncomfortable. Phalaris is seated on his throne just behind the bull, in a sort of undress uniform, with a long round ruler for sceptre in his right hand; firmness and mildness are so blended in his aspect that it is impossible not to feel in the presence of a great and good man; on the left side of the throne, a Polonius is standing a little in the background, with a look of lively edification subdued by deference; and in the distance there is a view of hills and snug farmhouses, suggesting fair rents and fixity of tenure.

The rather hazy outlines of the old Greek tradition are filled up by Phalaris himself in the Letters, which abound with little bits of autobiography. He gives us to know that he was born,—not at Agrigentum, as Lucian has it,—but at a place called Astypalaea, seemingly a town in Crete. He got into trouble there at an early age, being suspected of aiming at a tyranny, and was banished, leaving his wife and son behind him; when he betook himself to Agrigentum, and there became a farmer of taxes; obtained the management of a contract for building a temple on the rocky height above the town; hired troops with the funds thus committed to him; and so made himself master of the place. Some of the letters are to his wife, his son, and a few of his particular friends, among whom is the poet Stesichorus. One or two epistles are addressed to distinguished

strangers, begging them to come and see him in Sicily,—as to Pythagoras, and Abaris the Hyperborean ; and, what is very curious, the collection gives us the answer sent by Abaris, which refers not obscurely to the bull, and declines the invitation of the prince in language more forcible than polite. Then there are a few letters to various communities,—the people of Messene, the people of Tauromenion, and others.

It may be well to give a short specimen or two. Not a few of the Letters, it should be premised, are pervaded by a strain of allusion to the bull. Phalaris was a person of almost morbid sensibility, and if there was one subject on which he was more alive to innuendo than another it was this of the bull, and the want of regard for the feelings of others which his use of it had been thought to imply. There are moments when he can no longer suffer in silence, but comes to the point, as in the following letter to the Athenians [Ep. 122 = 5 (Lennepe)]:—

‘Your artist Perilaus, Athenians, came to me with some works of very satisfactory execution ; on account of which we gladly received him, and requited him with worthy gifts, for the sake of his art, and more particularly for the sake of his native city. Not long since, however, he made a brazen bull of more than natural size, and brought it to Akragas. Now we were delighted to welcome an animal whose labours are associated with those of man ; the effigy appeared a most proper gift to a prince,—a noble object of art ; for he had not yet disclosed to us the death which lurked within. But when he opened a door in the flank, and laid bare

Murder fulfilled of perfect cruelty,  
A fate more dire than all imagined death—

then, indeed, after praising him for his skill, we proceeded to punish him for his inhumanity. We resolved to make him the first illustration of his own device, since we had never met with a worse villain than its contriver. So we put him into the bull, and lit the fire about it, according to his own directions for the burning. Cruel was his science; stern the proof to which he brought it. We did not see the sufferer; we heard not his cries or lamentations; for the human shrieks that resounded within came forth to his listening punishers as the bellowings of a brazen throat.

‘Now, Athenians, when I was informed that you resented the removal of your artist, and were incensed with me, I felt surprise; and for the present I am unable to credit the report. If you censure me on the ground that I did not torment him by a more cruel mode of death, I reply that no mode more cruel has yet occurred to me; if, on the other hand, you blame me for having punished him at all, then your city, which glories in its humanity, courts the charge of extreme barbarity. The bull was the work of one Athenian, or of all: but this will be decided by your disposition towards me.... If you consider the case dispassionately, you will perceive that I act involuntarily; and that, if Providence decrees that I must suffer, my lot will be unmerited. Though my royal power gives me free scope of action, I still recognise that measures of a harsh tendency are exceptional; and, though I cannot revoke the deeds of the past, I can confess their gravity. Would, however, that I had never been compelled to them by a hard necessity! In that case, no one else would have been named for his virtues where Phalaris was in company.’

The following letter, addressed by Phalaris to a peevish



critic, shows that consciousness of rectitude had gradually braced the too sensitive mind of the prince [Ep. 66 = 94 (Lennep)]:—

*To Telecleides.*

‘For reasons best known to yourself, you have repeatedly observed in conversation with my friends that, after the death of Perilaus, the artist of the bull, I ought not to have despatched any other persons by the same mode of torment; since I thus cancel my own merit. Possibly you had in view the result which has actually occurred—viz., that your remarks should be carried to me. Now, as to Perilaus, I do not value myself upon the compliments which I received for having punished him; praise was not my object in assuming that office. As to the other persons, I feel no uneasiness at the misrepresentations to which I am exposed for chastising them. Retribution operates in a sphere apart from good or evil report. Permit me, however, to observe that my reason for correcting the artist was precisely this,—that other persons *were* to be despatched in the bull....Well, I am now in possession of your views; it is unnecessary for you to trouble other listeners; do but cease to worry yourself and me.’

The slight testiness which appears at the end only confirms Sir William Temple’s remark, that here we have to do with a man of affairs, whose time was not to be at the mercy of every idle tattler. After Wotton had published the first edition of his ‘Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning’ (1694), Bentley had happened to speak with him of the passage in Temple’s Essay which we quoted above. Bentley observed that the Letters of



Phalaris could be proved to be spurious, and that nothing composed by Æsop was extant: opinions which he had formed, and intimated, long before Temple wrote. Wotton then obtained a promise from Bentley that he would give his reasons for these views in a paper to be printed as an appendix to the second edition of the 'Reflections.' But meanwhile an incident occurred which gave a new turn to the matter.

Dr Henry Aldrich, then Dean of Christ Church, had been accustomed to engage the most promising of the younger scholars in the task of editing classical authors, and copies of such editions were usually presented by him to members of the House at the beginning of the year. Temple's essay had attracted attention to the Letters of Phalaris. In 1693 the preparation of a new edition was proposed by the Dean to 'a young Gentleman of great hopes' (as Bentley calls him), the Honourable Charles Boyle, a brother of the Earl of Orrery, and grand-nephew of Robert Boyle, the founder of the Lectures. Charles Boyle was at this time only seventeen. Before coming to Oxford, he had been the private pupil of Dr Gale, the Dean of York (formerly, for a brief space, Greek Professor at Cambridge), of whom he says—'the foundation of all the little knowledge I have in these matters was laid by him, which I gratefully own.' Boyle's scholarship seems to have been quite up to the higher school-standard of that day; he appears to have been bright, clever, and amiable, and was personally much liked at Christ Church. In preparing his Phalaris, he wished to consult a manuscript which was in the King's Library at St James's. He accordingly wrote to his bookseller in London, Mr Thomas Bennet, 'at the Half-Moon in St Paul's Church-yard,' requesting him to

get the manuscript collated. This was apparently in September, 1693. Bentley had then nothing to do with the Library. The Royal Patent constituting him Keeper of His Majesty's Libraries bore date April 12, 1694; and, owing to delays of form, it was the beginning of May before he had actual custody of the Library at St James's. Bennet had already spoken to Bentley (early in 1694, it seems) about the manuscript of Phalaris; and Bentley had replied that he would gladly 'help Mr Boyle to the book.'

Meanwhile Bennet had received urgent applications from Boyle, and had laid the blame of the delay on Bentley. As soon as the latter had assumed charge of the Library (May, 1694), he gave the manuscript to a person sent for it by Bennet. 'I ordered him,' says Bentley, 'to tell the collator not to lose any time; for I was shortly to go out of town for two months.' This was afterwards proved by a letter from Gibson, the person employed as collator. The manuscript remained in Gibson's hands 'five or six days,' according to Bentley; and this estimate can scarcely be excessive, for Boyle himself says merely 'not *nine*.' Bentley was to leave London for Worcester (to reside two months there) at five o'clock on a Monday morning towards the end of May. On the Saturday before, about noon, Bentley went to Bennet's shop, asked for the manuscript, and waited while a message was sent to Gibson. Word came back that Gibson had not finished the collation. Bennet then begged that the manuscript might be left with him till Sunday morning, and promised to make the collator sit up all night. Bentley declined to comply with this demand; but said that they might keep the manuscript till the evening of that day—Saturday. On Saturday

evening it was restored to Bentley. Only forty-eight letters had then been collated.

As this affair was made a grave charge against Bentley, it is well to see just what it means. The business of the collator was to take a printed text of Phalaris, compare it with the manuscript, and note those readings in which the manuscript differed from it. This particular manuscript was, in Bentley's words, 'as legible as print.' 'I had a mind,' he says, 'for the experiment's sake, to collate the first forty epistles, which are all that the collator has done. And I had finished them in an hour and eighteen minutes; though I made no very great haste. And yet I remarked and set down above fifty various lections, though the editor has taken notice of one only.' This manuscript contains only 127 of the 148 letters. At Bentley's rate, the whole might have been done in about five hours. Suppose that Bentley worked thrice as fast as Gibson; the latter would have required fifteen hours. Grant, further, that Gibson had the manuscript for four days only, though Boyle's phrase, 'less than nine,' implies eight. He could still have completed his task by working less than four hours a day. So utterly groundless was the complaint that Bentley had not allowed sufficient time for the use of the manuscript.

That, however, was the defence which Bennet made to his employer. Clearly he had no liking for the new Librarian who had begun by exacting the dues of the Royal Library. And he supported it by representing Bentley as unfriendly to Boyle's work. 'The bookseller once asked me privately,' says Bentley, 'that I would do him the favour to tell my opinion, if the new edition of Phalaris, then in the press, would

be a vendible book? for he had a concern in the impression, and hoped it would sell well; such a great character being given of it in [Temple's] Essays as made it mightily inquired after. I told him, He would be safe enough, since he was concerned for nothing but the sale of the book: for the great names of those that recommended it would get it many buyers. But however, under the rose, the book was a spurious piece, and deserved not to be spread in the world by another impression.' Dr William King, a member of Christ Church, and a 'wit,' chanced to be in Bennet's shop one day, and overheard some remark of Bentley's which he considered rude towards Boyle. 'After he [Bentley] was gone,' writes the frank Dr King, 'I told Mr Bennet that he ought to send Mr Boyle word of it.' Boyle's edition of Phalaris appeared in January, 1695, with a graceful dedication to the Dean of Christ Church. The Latin preface concludes thus:—

'I have collated the letters themselves with two Bodleian manuscripts from the Cantuar and Selden collection; I have also procured a collation, as far as Letter XL., of a manuscript in the Royal Library; the Librarian, with that courtesy which distinguishes him [*pro singulari sua humanitate*], refused me the further use of it. I have not recorded every variation of the MSS. from the printed texts; to do so would have been tedious and useless; but, wherever I have departed from the common reading, my authority will be found in the notes. This little book is indebted to the printer for more than usual elegance; it is hoped that the author's labour may bring it an equal measure of acceptance.'

*Pro singulari sua humanitate*: with that courtesy



which distinguishes him : or as Bentley renders it with grim literalness, 'out of his singular humanity' ! This, says Bentley, 'was meant as a lash for me, who had the honour then and since to serve his Majesty in that office' (of Librarian) ; and, in fact, the nature of Bentley's 'humanity' forthwith became a question of the day.

The tone of Boyle's public reference to Bentley was wholly unjustifiable. Bentley had returned from Worcester to London some months before Boyle's book was ready, but no application had been made to him for a further use of the manuscript, though a few hours would have finished the collation. Bentley, after his return to London, spent a fortnight at Oxford, 'conversing,' he says, 'in the very college where the editors resided ; not the least whisper there of the manuscript.' It was on January 26—when the book had been out more than three weeks—that Bentley chanced to see it for the first time, 'in the hands of a person of honour to whom it had been presented ; and the rest of the impression was not yet published. This encouraged me to write the very same evening to Mr Boyle at Oxford, and to give him a true information of the whole matter ; expecting that, upon the receipt of my letter, he would put a stop to the publication of his book, till he had altered that passage, and printed the page anew ; which he might have done in one day, and at the charge of five shillings. I did not expressly desire him to take out that passage, and reprint the whole leaf ; that I thought was too low a submission. But I said enough to make any person of common justice and ingenuity [ingenuousness] have owned me thanks for preventing him from doing a very ill action.' 'After a delay of two posts,' Boyle replied in terms of which Bentley gives



the substance thus;—‘that what I had said in my own behalf might be true; but that Mr Bennet had represented the thing quite otherwise. If he had had my account before, he should have considered of it: and [but?] now that the book was made public, he would not interpose, but that I might do myself right in what method I pleased.’ On receiving Bentley’s explanation, Boyle was clearly bound, if not to withdraw the offensive passage, at least to stop its circulation until he had inquired further. And he knew this, as his own words show. This is his account of his reply to Bentley:—‘That Mr Bennet, whom I employed to wait on him in my name, gave me such an account of his reception, that I had reason to apprehend myself affronted: and since I could make no other excuse to my reader, for not collating the King’s MS., but because ’twas denyed me, I thought I cou’d do no less than express some resentment of that denial. That I shou’d be very much concern’d if Mr Bennet had dealt so ill with me as to mislead me in his accounts; *and if that appear’d, shou’d be ready to take some opportunity of begging his [Bentley’s] pardon: and, as I remember, I express’d myself so, that the Dr might understand I meant to give him satisfaction as publickly as I had injur’d him. Here the matter rested, and I thought that Dr Bentley was satisfied.*’

That is to say, Boyle had offered a public affront to Bentley, without inquiring whether Bennet’s story was true; Bentley explained that it was untrue; and Boyle still refused to make any amend, even provisionally. Bentley was advised by some of his friends to refute the aspersion: which, indeed, was not merely a charge of rudeness, but also of failure in his duty as Librarian.

He remained silent. 'Out of a natural aversion to all quarrels and broils, and out of regard to the editor himself, I resolved to take no notice of it, but to let the matter drop.'

But in 1697 Wotton was preparing a second edition of the 'Reflections,' and claimed Bentley's old promise to write something on *Æsop* and *Phalaris*. Then, in a great hurry, Bentley wrote an essay on the 'Epistles of *Phalaris*, *Themistocles*, *Socrates*, *Euripides*, and others; and the Fables of *Æsop*.' This essay was printed, with a separate title-page, at the end of the new edition of the 'Reflections' (1697). What was he to say about Boyle? 'Upon such an occasion,' he remarks, 'I was plainly obliged to speak of that calumny: for my silence would have been interpreted as good as a confession: especially considering with what industrious malice the story had been spread all over England.' In this he was possibly right: it is not easy to say now. But his mode of self-vindication was certainly not judicious. He ought to have confined himself to a statement of the facts concerning the loan of the manuscript. After doing this, however, he enters upon a hostile review of Boyle's book. Throughout it he speaks in the plural of 'our editors.' He may have had reason to know that Boyle had been assisted; but such a use of the knowledge was unwarrantable.

Boyle's edition was the slight performance of a very young man, and apart from the sentence in the preface, might fairly be regarded as privileged. It contains a short Latin life of *Phalaris*, based on ancient notices and on the Letters themselves; the Greek text, with a Latin version; and, at the end, some notes. These notes deserve mention only because Bentley was afterwards

accused of having 'pillaged' them. There was a singular hardihood in this charge. Boyle's notes on the hundred and forty-eight letters occupy just twelve small pages. The greater part of them are simply brief paraphrases intended to bring out the sense of the text. Three Latin translations of Phalaris then existed; one, not printed, but easily accessible in manuscript, by Francesco Accolti of Arezzo (Aretino); a second, printed by Thomas Kirchmeier, who Hellenized his surname into Naogeorgus (Basel, 1558); and a third, ascribed to Cujas, which Boyle knew as reissued at Ingolstadt in 1614 for the use of the Jesuit schools. Boyle's version occasionally coincides with phrases of Aretino or the Jesuit text: this, however, may well be accident. It is manifest, however, that his translation was based on that of Naogeorgus, who is sometimes less elegant, but not seldom more accurate.

The story of the controversy has usually been told as if Boyle defended the genuineness of the Letters, while Bentley impugned it. That is certainly the impression which any one would derive from Bentley's Dissertation, with its banter of 'our editors and their Sicilian prince.' Probably it will be new to most persons that Boyle had never asserted the genuineness of the Letters. On the contrary, he had expressly stated some reasons for believing that they were not genuine.

I translate the following from Boyle's Latin preface:—

The reader of these Letters will find less profit in inquiring who wrote them than pleasure in enjoying the perusal. As to the authorship, the conflicting opinions of learned men must be consulted,—perhaps in vain; as to the worth of the book, the reader can judge best for himself. Lest I disappoint curiosity, however,—though the controversy does not deserve

keen zeal on either part,—I will briefly explain what seems to me probable on both sides of the question.

Here he enumerates: (1) some of those who think the Letters genuine—including Sir W. Temple, whose encomium on Phalaris he freely Latinizes: (2) those who believe the Letters to be the work of Lucian. Here Boyle gives his reasons—excellent as far as they go—for holding that Lucian was *not* the author. He then resumes:—

These are my reasons for not ascribing the letters to Lucian; there are other reasons which make me doubt whether Phalaris can claim the Letters as his own. It was scarcely possible that Letters written by so distinguished a man, and in their own kind perfect, should have remained completely hidden for more than a thousand years: and, as Sicilian writers always preferred the Dorian dialect, the tyrant of the Agrigentines (who were Dorians) ought to have used no other. In the style there is nothing unworthy of a king,—except that he is too fond of antithesis, and sometimes rather frigid. I have also noticed that sometimes (though that may be accidental) the letters bear names which look as if they had been invented to suit the contents. As to history, time has robbed us of all certain knowledge regarding the state of Sicily and its commonwealth, in that age; and the recipients of the letters are mostly obscure, except Stesichorus, Pythagoras, and Abaris; whose age agrees with that of Phalaris,—thus affording no hold for doubt on that ground. If, however, Diodorus Siculus is right in saying that Tauromenium, whose citizens our author addresses, was built and so called after the destruction of Naxos by the younger Dionysius,—then the claim of Phalaris is destroyed, and the whole fabric of conjectural ascription falls to the ground. This is the sum of what I had to say on my author,—set forth, indeed, somewhat hastily; but, if more learned men have anything to urge against it, I am ready to hear it.



Boyle wrote this, let it be remembered, before Bentley had published anything on the subject. Boyle was strictly justified in saying afterwards, 'I never profess'd myself a patron of Phalaris;' 'I was not in the least concern'd to vindicate the Letters.' He defines his own position with exactness in another place: 'Phalaris was always a favourite book with me: from the moment I knew it, I wish'd it might prove an original: I had now and then, indeed, some suspicions that 'twas not genuine; but I lov'd him so much more than I suspected him, that I wou'd not suffer myself to dwell long upon 'em. To be sincere, the opinion, or mistake, if you will, was so pleasing that I was somewhat afraid of being undeceiv'd.' It was Sir William Temple, not Boyle, who was committed to the view that the Letters were genuine.

We shall speak of Bentley's Dissertation in its second and mature form. The first rough draft, in Wotton's book, is a rapid argument, with just enough illustration to make each topic clear. It had been very hastily written. That Boyle and his friends should have been angry, can surprise no one. Bentley, in rebutting a calumny, had become a rough assailant. A reply came out in January, 1696. It was entitled, 'Dr Bentley's Dissertations on the Epistles of Phalaris and the Fables of Æsop, examin'd by the Honourable Charles Boyle, Esq.' The motto was taken from Roscommon's 'Essay of Translated Verse.'

Remember Milo's end;

Wedg'd in that Timber, which he strove to rend.

The piece is clever and effective. 'Soon after Dr Bentley's Dissertation came out,' Boyle says in the preface, 'I was call'd away into Ireland, to attend the Parliament there. The publick business, and my own



private affairs, detain'd me a great while in that kingdom; else the world should have had a much earlier account of him and his performance.' Boyle explains that he had edited the Letters 'rather as one that wish'd well to learning than profess'd it.' His motive for replying to Bentley's attack is 'the publick affront' of being charged with setting his name to a book which was not his own. No one had helped him in it,—except one friend who had been his adviser 'upon any difficulty,' and had also consulted 'some books' for him 'in the Oxford Libraries.' As to the Letters, he had neither asserted nor denied their genuineness. He is sorry to have been the occasion of bringing such a storm on the head of Sir William Temple. He regrets, too, that Bentley should have extended his aspersions to Christ Church. Then comes an onslaught on Bentley's essay and a defence of Boyle's book. 'A Short Account of Dr Bentley by way of Index' was appended to the second edition. This is an index to the preceding 266 pages, under such heads as these:—'*Dr Bentley's civil usage of Mr Boyle; His singular humanity to Mr Boyle; His elegant Similes; His clean and gentile Metaphors; His old Sayings and Proverbs; His Collection of Asinine Proverbs; His extraordinary talent at Drollery; His dogmatical air; His Ingenuity in transcribing and plundering Notes and Prefaces of Mr Boyle* [here follows a list of other victims]. *His modesty and decency in contradicting Great Men* [here follows a list of the persons contradicted, ending with *Everybody*].'

This, we know, was a joint performance. Francis Atterbury, afterwards Bishop of Rochester, was then thirty-six: George Smalridge was a year younger. Both were already distinguished at Oxford. Atterbury, in a

letter to Boyle, says with reference to this piece: 'in writing more than half of the book, in reviewing a good part of the rest, in transcribing the whole and attending the press half a year of my life has passed away.' Smalridge is supposed to have contributed a playful proof that Bentley did not write his own essay. This is a parody of Bentley's arguments about Phalaris, partly woven with his own words and phrases. This sham Bentley—urges the critic—'is a perfect Dorian in his language, in his thoughts, and in his breeding.' It is vain to plead that 'he was born in some Village remote from Town, and bred among the Peasantry while young.' The real Bentley had been 'a Member of one University, and a Sojourner in the other; a Chaplain in Ordinary to the King, and a Tutor in extraordinary to a Young Gentleman:' such a man must surely have written *Attic*; he must 'have quitted his Old Country Dialect for that of a Londoner, a Gentleman, and a Scholar.' Then the sham Bentley is 'a Fierce and Angry Writer; and One, who when he thinks he has an advantage over another Man, gives him no Quarter.' But the real Bentley says in his Letter to Dr Mill, 'it is not in my nature to trample upon the Prostrate.' The real Bentley was 'much vers'd in the Learned Languages.' This pseudo-Bentley shows 'that he was not only a perfect Stranger to the best Classic Authors, but that he wanted that Light which any Ordinary Dictionary would have afforded him.' The pages on *Æsop* may have been chiefly due to Anthony Alsop, a young Student of Christ Church, who edited the Fables in that year (1698). The 'very deserving gentleman' to whom Boyle refers as his assistant appears to have been John Freind, whose brother Robert (both were Students of Christ Church) is

also believed to have helped. Some of the insults to Bentley are very gross. Thus it is hinted, twice over, that his further compliance in the matter of the manuscript might have been purchased by a fee. This is the only thing in the piece which Bentley noticed with a word of serious reproof.

The book gives us some curious glimpses of the way in which critical studies were then viewed by Persons of Honour. 'Begging the Dr's pardon,' says Boyle, 'I take *Index-hunting* after Words and Phrases to be, next after *Anagrams* and *Acrosticks*, the lowest Diversion a Man can betake himself to.' Boyle is apprehensive lest 'worthy Men, who know so well how to employ their hours, should be diverted from the pursuit of Useful Knowledge into such trivial Enquiries as these:' and he shrinks from being suspected of having 'thrown away any considerable part of his life on so trifling a subject.' He need not have felt much uneasiness.

However small Boyle's share in this book may have been, it is right to observe that there is an almost ludicrous exaggeration in the popular way of telling the story, as if all Christ Church, or all Oxford, had been in a league to annihilate Bentley. The joint book was written by a group of clever friends who represented only themselves. Rymer, indeed, says, 'Dr Aldrich, no doubt, was at the head of them, and smoaked and punned plentifully on this occasion.' But this was a mistake. The 'Short Review' published anonymously in 1701 (the author was Atterbury) says expressly:—'That an answer was preparing, he [the Dean of Christ Church] knew nothing of till 'twas publick talk, and he never saw a line of the *Examination* but in Print.'

In the preface to Anthony Alsop's *Æsop*—another of the Christ Church editions, which came out, before Boyle's book, early in 1698—our hero is mentioned as 'a certain Bentley, diligent enough in turning over lexicons;' and his behaviour about the manuscript is indicated by a Latin version of 'The Dog in the Manger.' The wearied ox, coming home to dinner, is driven from his hay by the snarling usurper, and remonstrates warmly; when the dog replies, 'You call me currish; if foreigners are any judges, there is not a hound alive that approaches me in humanity.' To whom the ox: 'Is this your *singular humanity*, to refuse me the food that you will not and cannot enjoy yourself?'

At last 'Boyle against Bentley' came out (1698). Its success was enormous. A second edition was called for in a few months. A third edition followed in the next year. Forty-six years later, when both the combatants were dead, it was still thought worth while to publish a fourth edition.

Temple lost no time in pronouncing. In March, just after the book appeared, he writes:—'The compass and application of so much learning, the strength and pertinence of his (Boyle's) arguments, the candour of his relations, in return to such foul-mouthed raillery, the pleasant turns of wit, and the easiness of style, are in my opinion as extraordinary as the contrary of these all appear to be in what the Doctor and his friend [Wotton] have written.' Hard as this is on Bentley, it is harder still on poor Wotton, who had been elaborately civil to Temple. Garth published his *Dispensary* in 1699, with that luckless couplet,—meant, says Noble, 'to please his brother wits at Button's:—



So diamonds take a lustre from their foil,  
And to a Bentley 'tis we owe a Boyle.

John Milner, formerly Vicar of Leeds, had, as a non-juror, lost his preferments at the Revolution, and was then living at St John's College, Cambridge. In his 'View of the Dissertation' (1698) he proposes 'to manifest the incertitude of heathen chronology,' and takes part against Bentley. According to Eustace Budgell, a caricature was published at Cambridge, in which Phalaris was consigning Bentley to the bull, while the Doctor exclaimed, 'I would rather be roasted than boyled.' Rymer, in his 'Essay on Critical and Curious Learning' (1698), blames both parties. As to the question at issue, he argues that 'curious' learning is all very well in its way, but should not be carried too far. On Boyle's critique Rymer makes a shrewd remark: 'There is such a profusion of wit all along, and such variety of points and raillery, that every man seems to have thrown in a repartee or so in his turn.' Mr Cole (of Magdalen College, Oxford) compared it to 'a Cheddar cheese, made of all the milk of the parish.'

In short, 'society' had declared against Bentley, and the men of letters almost unanimously agreed with it. While other acquaintances were turning their backs, Evelyn stood loyal. That was the state of things in 1698. Bentley remained calm. A friend who met him one day urged him not to lose heart. 'Indeed,' he replied, 'I am in no pain about the matter; for it is a maxim with me that no man was ever written out of reputation but by himself.' Meanwhile he was preparing a reply.



## CHAPTER V.

### BENTLEY'S DISSERTATION.

WE have seen that Bentley's essay in Wotton's book had been a hasty production. 'I drew up that dissertation,' he says, 'in the spare hours of a few weeks; and while the Printer was employed about one leaf, the other was amaking.' He now set to work to revise and enlarge it. He began his task about March, 1698—soon after Boyle's pamphlet appeared—but was interrupted in it by the two months of his residence at Worcester, from the end of May to the end of July. It was finished towards the close of 1698. The time employed upon it had thus been about seven and a half months, not free from other and urgent duties. It was published early in 1699. Let us clearly apprehend the point at issue. Boyle did not assert that the Letters of Phalaris were genuine; but he denied that Bentley had yet proved them to be spurious.

After a detailed refutation of the personal charges against him, Bentley comes to the Letters of Phalaris. First he takes the flagrant anachronisms. The Letters mention towns which, at the supposed date, were not built, or bore other names. Phalaris presents his physician with the ware of a potter named Thericles,—much as if

Oliver Cromwell were found dispensing the masterpieces of Wedgwood. Phalaris quotes books which had not been written ; nay, he is familiar with forms of literature which had not been created. Though a Dorian, he writes to his familiar friends in Attic, and in a species of false Attic which did not exist for five centuries after he was dead. Farmer of the taxes though he had been, he has no idea of values in the ordinary currency of his own country. Thus he complains that the hostile community of Catana had made a successful raid on his principality, and had robbed him of no less a sum than seven talents. Again he mentions with some complacency that he has bestowed the munificent dower of five talents on a lady of distinction. According to the Sicilian standard, the loss of the prince would have amounted to twelve shillings and seven pence, while the noble bride would have received nine shillings. The occasions of the letters, too, are often singular. A Syracusan sends his brother to Akragas, a distance of a hundred miles, with a request that Phalaris would send a messenger to Stesichorus (another hundred miles or so), and beg that poet to write a copy of verses on the Syracusan's deceased wife. 'This,' says Bentley, 'is a scene of putid and senseless formality.' Then Phalaris (who brags in one of the letters that Pythagoras had stayed five months with him) says to Stesichorus, '*pray* do not mention me in your poems.' 'This,' says Bentley, 'was a sly fetch of our sophist, to prevent so shrewd an objection from Stesichorus's silence as to any friendship at all with him.' But supposing Phalaris had really been so modest—Bentley adds,—still, Stesichorus was a man of the world. The poet would have known 'that those sort of requests are but a modest simulation, and a disobedience would

have been easily pardoned.' Again, these Letters are not mentioned by any writer before the fifth century of our era, and it is clear that the ancients did not know them. Thus, in the Letters, Phalaris displays the greatest solicitude for the education of his son Paurolas, and writes to the young man in terms which would do credit to the best of fathers. But in Aristotle's time there was a tradition which placed the parental conduct of Phalaris in another light. It alleged, in fact, that, while this boy was still of a tender age, the prince had caused him to be served up at table: but how, asks Bentley,—supposing the Letters to be genuine—'could he eat his son while he was an infant?' It is true, the works of some writers in the early Christian centuries (Phædrus, Paterculus, Lactantius) are not mentioned till long after their death. But the interval was one during which the Western world was lapsing into barbarism. The supposed epoch of Phalaris was followed by 'the greatest and longest reign of learning that the world has yet seen:' and yet his Letters remain hidden for a thousand years. 'Take them in the whole bulk, they are a fardle of commonplaces, without any life or spirit from action and circumstance. Do but cast your eye upon Cicero's letters, or any statesman's, as Phalaris was; what lively characters of men there! what descriptions of place! what notifications of time! what particularity of circumstances! what multiplicity of designs and events! When you return to these again, you feel, by the emptiness and deadness of them, that you converse with some dreaming pedant with his elbow on his desk; not with an active, ambitious tyrant, with his hand on his sword, commanding a million of subjects.'

Bentley's incidental discussions of several topics are so

many concise monographs, each complete in itself, each exhaustive within its own limits, and each, at the same time, filling its due place in the economy of the whole. Such are the essays on the age of Pythagoras, on the beginnings of Greek Tragedy, on anapestic verse, on the coinage of Sicily. In the last-named subject, it might have appeared almost impossible that a writer of Bentley's time should have made any near approximation to correctness. He had not such material aids as are afforded by the Sicilian coins which we now possess,—without which the statements of ancient writers would appear involved in hopeless contradiction. I am glad, therefore, to quote an estimate of Bentley's work in this department by a master of numismatic science. Mr Barclay Head writes:—‘Speaking generally, Bentley's results are surprisingly accurate. I think I may safely say that putting aside what was to have been done within the last fifty years, Bentley's essay stands alone. Even Eckhel, in his *‘Doctrina numorum’* (1790), has nothing to compare with it.’ Again, Bentley's range and grasp of knowledge are strikingly seen in critical remarks of general bearing which are drawn from him by the course of the discussion. Thus at the outset he gives in a few words a broad view of the origin and growth of literary forgery in the ancient world. In the last two centuries before Christ, when there was a keen rivalry between the libraries of Pergamus and Alexandria, the copiers of manuscripts began the practice of inscribing them with the names of great writers, in order that they might fetch higher prices. Thus far, the motive of falsification was simply mercenary. But presently a different cause began to swell the number of spurious works. It was a favourite exercise of rhetoric, in the



early period of the Empire, to compose speeches or letters in the name and character of some famous person. At first such exercises would, of course, make no pretence of being anything more. But, as the art was developed, 'some of the Greek Sophists had the success and satisfaction to see their essays in that kind pass with some readers for the genuine works of those they endeavoured to express. This, no doubt, was great content and joy to them; being as full a testimony of their skill in imitation, as the birds gave to the painter when they pecked at his grapes.' Some of them, indeed, candidly confessed the trick. 'But most of them took the other way, and, concealing their own names, put off their copies for originals; preferring that silent pride and fraudulent pleasure, though it was to die with them, before an honest commendation from posterity for being good imitators.' And hence such Letters as those of Phalaris.

Dr Aldrich had lately dedicated his *Logic* to Charles Boyle. Bentley makes a characteristic use of this circumstance. 'If his new System of Logic teaches him such arguments,' says Bentley, 'I'll be content with the old ones.' The whole Dissertation, in fact, is a remorseless syllogism. But Bentley is more than a sound reasoner. He shows in a high degree the faculties which go to make debating power. He is frequently successful in the useful art of turning the tables. Alluding to his opponent's mock proof that 'Dr Bentley could not be the author of the Dissertation,' he remarks that Boyle's Examination is open to a like doubt in good earnest, if we are to argue 'from the variety of styles in it, from its contradictions to his edition of Phalaris, from its contradictions to itself, from its contradictions to Mr B.'s character and to his title of honourable.' Boyle had said



of Bentley, 'the man that writ this must have been fast asleep, for else he could never have talked so wildly.' Bentley replies, 'I hear a greater paradox talked of abroad; that not the "wild" only, but the best, part of the Examiner's book may possibly have been written while he was fast asleep.'

He is often neat, too, in exploding logical fallacies. Boyle argued that, as Diodorus gives two different dates for the founding of Tauromenium, neither can be trusted. Bentley rejoins: 'One man told me in company that the Examiner was twenty-four years old; and another said, twenty-five. Now, these two stories contradict one another, and neither can be depended on; we are at liberty, therefore, to believe him a person of about fifty years of age.' Boyle had taken refuge in a desperate suggestion that people might have been called 'Tauromenites' from a river Tauromenius, before there was a city Tauromenium. 'Now,' says Bentley, 'if the Tauromenites were a sort of fish, this argument drawn from the river would be of great force.' Boyle had argued that a Greek phrase was not poetical because each of the two words forming it was common. Bentley quotes from Lucretius—

Luna dies, et nox, et noctis signa severa.

Is not every word common? And is the total effect prosaic? Bentley's retort is a mere quibble, turning on the ambiguity of 'common' as meaning either 'vulgar' or 'simple,'—but illustrates his readiness. Once,—as if in contempt for his adversary's understanding,—he has indulged in a notable sophism. Boyle had argued that the *name* 'tragedy' cannot have existed before the *thing*. Bentley rejoins:—'tis a proposition false in itself *that things themselves must be, before the names by*

*which they are called.* For we have many new tunes in music made every day, which never existed before ; yet several of them are called by *names* that were formerly in use ; and perhaps the tune of Chevy Chase, though it be of famous antiquity, is a little younger than the name of the chase itself. And I humbly conceive that Mr Hobbes's book, which he called the *Leviathan*, is not quite as ancient as its name is in Hebrew.' But the 'name' of which Boyle spoke was descriptive, not merely appellative. Bentley's reasoning would have been relevant only if Boyle had argued that, since a tragedy is called the 'Agamemnon,' Tragedy must have existed before Agamemnon lived.

As to the English style of the Dissertation, the Boyle party had expressed their opinion pretty freely when the first draft of it had appeared in Wotton's book. They complained that, when Bentley 'had occasion to express himself in Terms of Archness and Wagery,' he descended to 'low and mean Ways of Speech.' 'The familiar expressions of *taking one tripping,—coming off with a whole skin,—minding his hits,—a friend at a pinch,—going to blows,—setting horses together,—and going to pot ;* with others borrow'd from the Sports and Employments of the Country ; shew our Author to have been accustom'd to another sort of Exercise than that of the Schools.' Alluding to the painful fate which was said to have overtaken the mother of Phalaris, Bentley particularly shocked his critics by the phrase, '*Roasting the Old Woman ;*' and, in a similar strain of rustic levity he had described the parent of Euripides as '*Mother Clito the Herbwoman.*' Dr King, of Christ Church, (who, it will be remembered, had meddled in the manuscript affair,) had written an account of a journey to London ;

wherein he relates that, on his asking concerning the ales at a certain inn, the host answered 'that he had a thousand such sort of liquors, as humtie dumtie, three-threads, four-threads, old Pharoah [sic], knockdown, hug-metee,' &c. Playfully referring to this passage, Bentley says (speaking of a wild assertion), 'A man must be dosed with Humty-dumty that could talk so inconsistently : ' and again, speaking of Dr King's statements, 'If he comes with more testimonies of his Bookseller or his Humty-dumty acquaintance, I shall take those for no answer.' Worst of all, this familiar style was used towards Phalaris himself and his defenders. Speaking of the Greek rhetoricians, Bentley announces that his design is 'to pull off the disguise from those little Pedants that have so long stalkt about in the Apparel of Heroes.' The work of Boyle and his assistants is thus characterised : 'Here are your Work-men to mend an author ; as bungling Tinkers do old kettles ; there was but one hole in the text before they meddled with it, but they leave it with two.'

Not a soothing style this, nor one to be recommended for imitation. But what vigour there is in some of the phrases that Bentley strikes out at a red heat ! They ought to have made inquiries 'before they ventur'd to Print,—*which is a sword in the hand of a Child.*' 'He gives us some shining metaphors, and a polished period or two ; but, for the matter of it, it is *some common and obvious thought dressed and curled in the beauish way.*' Speaking of work which Bishop Pearson had left unfinished : 'though it has not passed the last hand of the author, yet it's every way worthy of him ; and the *very dust of his writings is gold.*' And here,—as Bentley was charged in this controversy with such

boundless arrogance, and such 'indecentcy in contradicting great men,'—let us note his tone in the Dissertation towards eminent men then living or lately dead. Nothing could be more becoming, more worthy of his own genius, than the warm, often glowing, terms in which he speaks of such men as Selden, Pearson, Lloyd, Stillingfleet, Spanheim,—in a word, of almost all the distinguished scholars whom he has occasion to name. Dodwell, who was ranged against him, is treated with scrupulous courtesy and fairness. Joshua Barnes, whose own conduct to Bentley had been remarkably bad, could scarcely be described more indulgently than in these words,—'one of a singular industry and a most diffuse reading.' Those were precisely the two things which could truly be said in praise of Barnes, and it would not have been easy to find a third.

Hallam characterises the style of the Dissertation as 'rapid, concise, amusing, and superior to Boyle in that which he had chiefly to boast, a sarcastic wit.' It may be questioned how far 'wit,' in its special modern sense, was a distinguishing trait on either side of this controversy. The chief weapons of the Boyle alliance were rather derision and invective. Bentley's sarcasm is always powerful and often keen; but the finer quality of wit, though seen in some touches, can hardly be said to pervade the Dissertation. As to the humour, that is unquestionable. There is so far an unconscious element in it, that its effect on the reader is partly due to Bentley's tremendous and unflagging earnestness in heaping up one absurdity upon another. This cumulative humour belongs to the essay as a whole; as Bentley marches on triumphantly from one exposure to another, our sense of the ludicrous is constantly rising. But it



can be seen on a smaller scale too. For instance, one of Boyle's grievances was that Bentley had indirectly called him an ass. In Bentley's words:—'By the help, he says, of a Greek proverb, I call him a downright ass. After I had censured a passage of Mr Boyle's translation that has no affinity with the original, *This puts me in mind*, said I, *of the old Greek proverb, that Leucon carries one thing, and his Ass quite another.* Where the Ass is manifestly spoken of the Sophist [the real author of the Letters,] whom I had before represented as *an Ass under a Lion's skin.* And if Mr B. has such a dearness for his Phalaris that he'll change places with him there, how can I help it? I can only protest that I put him into Leucon's place; and if he will needs compliment himself out of it, "*I must leave the two friends to the pleasure of their mutual civilities.*" [Boyle's own words about Bentley and Wotton.] But this was not all: Boyle had accused Bentley of comparing him to *Lucian's ass.* Now this, says Bentley, 'were it true, would be no coarse compliment, but a very obliging one. For Lucian's Ass was a very intelligent and ingenious Ass, and had more sense than any of his Riders; he was no other than Lucian himself in the shape of an ass, and had a better talent at kicking and bantering than ever the Examiner will have, though it seems to be his chief one.' 'But is this Mr B.'s way of interpreting similitudes?...If I liken an ill critic to a bungling Tinker, that makes two holes while he mends one; must I be charged with calling him Tinker? At this rate Homer will call his heroes Wolves, Boars, Dogs, and Bulls. And when Horace has this comparison about himself,

Demitto auriculas, ut iniquae mentis asellus,



Mr B. may tell him that he calls himself downright ass. But he must be put in mind of the English proverb, that similitudes, even when they are taken from asses, do not walk upon all four.' Swift,—alluding to the transference of the Letters from Phalaris to their real source,—called Bentley that 'great rectifier of saddles.' Bentley might have replied that he could rectify panniers too.

It would be a mistake to regard Bentley's Dissertation as if its distinctive merit had consisted in demonstrating the Letters of Phalaris to be spurious. That was by no means Bentley's own view. The spuriousness of these Letters, he felt from the first, was patent. He had given (in Wotton's book) a few of the most striking proofs of this: and he had been attacked. Now he was showing, in self-defence, that his proofs not only held good, but had deep and solid foundations. Others before him had suspected that the letters were forgeries, and he would have scorned to take the smallest credit for seeing what was so plain. He was the first to give sufficient reasons for his belief: but he did not care, and did not pretend, to give all the reasons that might be adduced. Indeed, any careful reader of the Letters can remark several proofs of spuriousness on which Bentley has not touched. For instance, it could be shown that the fictitious proper names are post-classical; that the forger was acquainted with Thucydides; and that he had read the *Theætetus* of Plato. But Bentley had done more than enough for his purpose. The glory of his treatise was not that it established his conclusion, but that it disclosed that broad and massive structure of learning upon which his conclusion rested. 'The only book that I have writ upon my own account,' he says, 'is this

present answer to Mr B.'s objections; and I assure him I set no great price upon 't; the errors that it refutes are so many, so gross and palpable, that I shall never be very proud of the victory.' At the same time, he justly refutes the assertion of his adversaries that the point at issue was of no moment. Bentley replies:—'That the single point whether Phalaris be genuine or no is of no small importance to learning, the very learned Mr Dodwell is a sufficient evidence; who, espousing Phalaris for a true author, has endeavoured by that means to make a great innovation in the ancient chronology. To undervalue this dispute about Phalaris because it does not suit to one's own studies, is to quarrel with a circle because it is not a square.'

A curious fatality attended on Bentley's adversaries in this controversy. While they dealt thrusts at points where he was invulnerable, they missed all the chinks in his armour except a statement limiting too narrowly the use of two Greek verbs, and his identification of 'Alba Graeca' with Buda instead of Belgrade. Small and few, indeed, these chinks were. It would have been a petty, but fair, triumph for his opponents, if they had perceived that, in correcting a passage of Aristophanes, he had left a false quantity. They might have shown that a passage in Diodorus had led him into an error regarding Attic chronology during the reign of the Thirty Tyrants. They might have exulted in the fact that an emendation which he proposed in Isaeus rested on a confusion between two different classes of choruses; that he had certainly misconstrued a passage in the life of Pythagoras by Iamblichus; that the 'Minos,' on which he relies as Plato's work, was spurious; that, in one of the Letters

of Phalaris, he had defended a false reading by false grammar. They could have shown that Bentley was demonstrably wrong in asserting that no writings, bearing the name of *Æsop*, were extant in the time of Aristophanes; also in stating that the Fable of 'The Two Boys' had not come down to the modern world: it was, in fact, very near them,—safe in a manuscript at the Bodleian Library. Even the discussion on *Zaleucus* escaped: its weak points were first brought out by later critics—Warburton, Salter, Gibbon. Had such blemishes been ten times more numerous, they would not have affected the worth of the book: but, such as they were, they were just of the kind which small detractors delight to magnify. In one place Bentley accuses Boyle of having adopted a wrong reading in one of the Letters, and thereby made nonsense of the passage. Now, Boyle's reading, though not the best, happens to be capable of yielding the very sense which Bentley required. Yet even this Boyle and his friends did not discover.

How was the Dissertation received? According to the popular account, no sooner had Bentley blown his mighty blast, than the walls of the hostile fortress fell flat. The victory was immediate, the applause universal, the foe's ruin overwhelming. Tyrwhitt, in his *Babrius*—published long after Bentley's death—is seeking to explain why Bentley never revised the remarks on *Æsop*, which he had published in Wotton's book. 'Content with having prostrated his adversaries with the second Dissertation on Phalaris, as by a thunderbolt, he withdrew in scorn from the uneven fight.'

Let us see what the evidence is. Just as the great Dissertation appeared, Boyle's friends published 'A short

Account of Dr Bentley's Humanity and Justice.' It is conceived in a rancorous spirit; Bentley is accused of having plundered, in his *Fragments of Callimachus*, some papers which Thomas Stanley, the editor of *Aeschylus*, left unpublished at his death; and Bentley's conduct to Boyle about the manuscript is set forth as related by the bookseller, Mr Bennet. Now, in John Locke's correspondence, I find a letter to him from Thomas Burnet, formerly a Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, and then Master of Charterhouse,—author of a fantastic book on the geological history of the earth (*Telluris Theoria Sacra*). The date is March 19, 1699. Bentley had read part of his preface to Burnet before it was published. Burnet had now read the whole, and a great part of the Dissertation itself; also the newly published 'Short Account.' He is now disposed to believe Bennet's version. 'I do profess upon second thoughts... that his story seemeth the more likely, if not the most true, of the two.' As to the letters of Phalaris, he is aware that some great scholars are with Bentley. 'But I doubt not,' he adds, 'that a greater number will be of another sentiment, who would not be thought to be of the unlearned tribe.' That, we may be sure, was what many people were saying in London. A defence of Bentley against the 'Short Account,' which came out at this time, has been ascribed to a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford,—Solomon Whately, the first translator of Phalaris into English.

The Boyle party had addressed themselves to the wits and the town. Bentley's work had plenty of qualities which could be appreciated in that quarter: but its peculiar strength lay in things of which few persons could judge. These few were at once convinced by it: and



their authority helped to convince the inner circles of students. But the Boyle party still had on their side all those who, regarding the contest as essentially an affair of style, preferred Boyle's style to Bentley's. This number would include the rank and file of fashion and its dependents,—the persons who wrote dedications, and the patrons in whose antechambers they waited. Most of them would be genuinely unconscious how good Bentley's answer was, and their prepossessions would set strongly the other way. So, while Bentley had persuaded the scholars, it would still be the tone of a large and influential world to say that, though the pedant might have brought cumbrous proofs of a few trivial points, Boyle had won a signal victory in 'wit, taste, and breeding.'

Swift's 'Battle of the Books' was begun when he was living with Sir William Temple at Moor Park in 1697. It was suggested by a French satire,—Coutray's *Histoire Poétique de la guerre nouvellement déclarée entre les anciens et les modernes*,—and referred to Bentley's *first* dissertation, which had just appeared. Temple was feeling sore, and Swift wished to please him. But its circulation was only private until it was published with the 'Tale of a Tub' in 1704. Temple had then been dead five years. If Bentley's victory had then been universally recognised as crushing, Swift would have been running the risk of turning the laugh against himself; and no man, so fond of wounding, liked that less. In the 'Battle of the Books,' Boyle is Achilles, clad in armour wrought by the gods. The character ascribed to Bentley and Wotton is expressed in the Homeric similes which adorn the grand battle at the end. 'As a Woman in a little House, that gets a painful livelihood by spinning; if chance her Geese be scattered o'er the Common, she courses round the plain



from side to side, compelling, here and there, the stragglers to the flock ; they cackle loud, and flutter o'er the champaign : so Boyle pursued, so fled this Pair of Friends..... As when a skilful Cook has truss'd a brace of Woodcocks, he, with iron Skewer, pierces the tender sides of both, their legs and wings close pinion'd to their ribs ; so was this Pair of Friends transfix'd, till down they fell, join'd in their lives, join'd in their deaths ; so closely join'd that Charon would mistake them both for one, and waft them over Styx for half his fare.' When this was first published, Bentley's second Dissertation had been five years before the public.

Against this satire—so purely popular that it lost nothing by being whetted on the wrong edge—we must set two pieces of contemporary evidence to Bentley's immediate success with his own limited audience. In discussing the age of Pythagoras, he had said : 'I do not pretend to pass my own judgment, or to determine positively on either side ; but I submit the whole to the censure of such readers as are well versed in ancient learning ; and particularly to that incomparable historian and chronologer, the Right Reverend the Bishop of Coventry and Litchfield.' In the same year (1699) Dr Lloyd responded by publishing his views on the question, prefaced by a dedicatory epistle to Bentley. The other testimony is of a different kind, but not less significant. 'A Short Review' of the controversy appeared in 1701. It was anonymous. Dyce says that a friend of his possessed a copy in which an early eighteenth century hand had written, 'by Dr Atterbury.' The internal evidence leaves no doubt of this. I may notice one indication of it, which does not appear to have been remarked. We have seen that the 'Examination' of Bentley's first essay was edited, and in great part written, by Atterbury. This ends with these

words:—‘I fancy that the reader will be glad to have... the Dr’s Picture in Miniature,’ rather ‘than that it should be again drawn out *at full length*.’ The ‘picture in miniature’ is the ‘Index’ already mentioned above. Now the ‘Short Review’ ends with ‘the Dr’s Advantagious Character of himself *at full length*.’ The writer of this ‘Character’ is clearly going back on his own footsteps: and that writer can be no other than Atterbury. He is very angry, and intensely bitter. He hints that Whig interest has bolstered up Bentley against Tory opponents. With almost incredible violence, he accuses Bentley of ‘lying, stealing, and prevaricating’ (p. 12). He contrasts the character of a ‘Critic’ with that of a ‘Gentleman.’ Stress is laid on the imputation that Bentley had attacked not Boyle alone, but also the illustrious society in which Boyle had been educated. The members of that society (Atterbury remarks), are not cut all alike as Bushels are by Winchester-measure: ‘But they are men of different Talents, Principles, Humours and Interests, who are seldom or never united save when some unreasonable oppression from abroad fastens them together, and consequently whatever ill is said of all of them is falsely said of many of them.’ ‘To answer the reflexion of a private Gentleman with a general abuse of the Society he belong’d to, is the manners of a dirty Boy upon a Country-Green.’ It will not avail Bentley that his friends ‘style him a Living Library, a Walking Dictionary, and a Constellation of Criticism.’ A solitary gleam of humour varies this strain. Some wiseacre had suggested that the Letters of Phalaris might corrupt the crowned heads of Europe, if kings should take up the Agrigentine tyrant as Alexander the Great took up Homer, and put him under their pillows at night. ‘I objected’—says the

author of the 'Short Review'—'that now, since the advancement of Learning and Civility in the world, Princes were more refined, and would be ashamed of such acts of Barbarity as Phalaris was guilty of in a ruder age.' But the alarmist stuck to his point; urging that 'his Czarish Majesty' (Peter the Great, then in the twelfth year of his reign) might have met with the Letters of Phalaris in his travels, and that 'his curiosity might have led him to make a Brazen Bull, when he came home, to burn his Rebels in.' The piece ends by renewing the charge of plagiarism against Bentley. 'Considering that the second Dissertation had now been out two years, this is a curiosity of literature:—*'Common Pilferers will still go on in their trade, even after they have suffer'd for it.'*

But, when Bentley's Dissertation had been published for half-a-century, surely there can have been no longer any doubt as to the completeness of his victory? We shall see. In 1749, seven years after Bentley's death, an English Translation of the Letters of Phalaris was published by Thomas Francklin. He had been educated at Westminster School, and was then a resident Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge; his translation of Sophocles is still well known. He dedicates his version of Phalaris to John, Earl of Orrery, alluding to the esteem in which the Greek author had been held by the late Lord Orrery (Charles Boyle). He then refers to 'the celebrated dispute' between Boyle and Bentley about these Letters. 'Doctor Bentley,' he allows, 'was always look'd on as a man of wit and parts.' On the other hand, Francklin vindicates Boyle against 'the foolish opinion' that he had been helped by 'some men of distinguished merit' in his book against Bentley. Had this been so, those men would have been eager to claim their share in

the reputation acquired by it. As they have not done so, there can be no reason why Boyle's 'claim to the deserved applause it has met with should ever for the future be call'd in question.' 'I have not enter'd into any of the points of the controversy,' Francklin proceeds, 'as it would be a disagreeable as well as unnecessary task, but shall only observe that, tho' *several very specious arguments are brought by Doctor Bentley, the strongest of them do only affect particular epistles; which as Mr Boyle observes, do not hurt the whole body;* for in a collection of pieces that have no dependence on each other, as epistles, epigrams, fables, the first number may be increased by the wantonness and vanity of imitators in aftertimes, and *yet the book be authentic in the main, and an original still.*'

Francklin was not outraging the sense of a learned community by writing thus. In the very next year (1750) he was elected to the Regius Professorship of Greek. Nothing could show more conclusively the average state of literary opinion on the controversy half-a-century after it took place. But there is evidence which carries us fifty years lower still. In 1804 Cumberland, Bentley's grandson, was writing his *Memoirs*. 'I got together' (he says) 'all the tracts relative to the controversy between Boyle and Bentley, omitting none even of the authorities and passages they referred to, and having done this, I compressed the reasonings on both sides into a kind of statement and report upon the question in dispute; and if, in the result, my judgment went with him to whom my inclination lent, *no learned critic in the present age will condemn me for the decision.*' Such was the apologetic tone which Bentley's grandson still thought due to the world, even after Tyrwhitt had



written of the 'thunderbolt,' and Porson of the 'immortal Dissertation'! The theory that Bentley had an immediate triumph does not represent the general impression of his own age, but reflects the later belief of critical scholars, who felt the crushing power of Bentley's reply, and imagined that every one must have felt it when it first appeared. The tamer account of the matter, besides being the truer, is also far more really interesting. It shows how long the clearest truth may have to wait.

Bentley's Dissertation was translated into Latin by the Dutch scholar, John Daniel Lennep, who edited the Letters of Phalaris. After Lennep's death, the translation and the edition were published together by Valckenaer (1777). The Dissertation was subsequently rendered into German, with notes, by Ribbeck; and only seven years ago (1874) the English text of the Dissertation (both in its first and in its second form) was reissued in Germany, with Introduction and notes, by Dr Wilhelm Wagner. It has thus been the destiny of Bentley's work, truly a work of genius, to become in the best sense monumental. In a literature of which continual supersession is the law, it has owed this permanent place to its triple character as a storehouse of erudition, an example of method, and a masterpiece of controversy. Isaac Disraeli justly said of it that 'it heaves with the workings of a master spirit.' Bentley's learning everywhere bears the stamp of an original mind; and, even where it can be corrected by modern lights, has the lasting interest of showing the process by which an intellect of rare acuteness reached approximately true conclusions. As a consecutive argument it represents the first sustained application of strict reasoning to questions of ancient literature—a domain in which his adversaries,



echoing the sentiment of their day, declared that 'all is but a lucky guess.' As a controversial reply, it is little less than marvellous, if we remember that his very clever assailants had been unscrupulous in their choice of weapons,—freely using every sort of insinuation, however irrelevant or gross, which could tell,—and that Bentley repulsed them at every point, without once violating the usages of legitimate warfare. While he demolishes, one by one, the whole series of their relevant remarks, he steadily preserves his own dignity by simply turning back upon them the dishonour of their own calumnies and the ridicule of their own impertinence. With a dexterity akin to that of a consummate debater, he wields the power of retort in such a manner that he appears to be hardly more than the amused spectator of a logical recoil.

Shortly before Swift described Boyle as Achilles, poor Achilles was writing from Ireland, in some perturbation of spirit, to those gods who were hard at work on his armour, and confiding his hopes 'that it would do no harm.' It did not do much. This was the first controversy in English letters that had made anything like a public stir, and it is pleasant to think that Achilles and his antagonist appear to have been good friends afterwards: if any ill-will lingered, it was rather in the bosoms of the Myrmidons. Dr William King, who had helped to make the mischief, never forgave Bentley for his allusions to 'Humty-dumty,' and satirised him in ten 'Dialogues of the Dead' (on Lucian's model)—a title which suits their dulness. Bentley is Bentivoglio, a critic who knows that the first weather-cock was set up by the Argonauts and that cushions were invented by Sardanapalus. Salter mentions a tradition, current in

1777, that Boyle, after he became Lord Orrery, visited Bentley at Trinity College, Cambridge. There is contemporary evidence, not, indeed, for such personal intercourse, but for the existence of mutual esteem. In 1721 a weekly paper, 'The Spy,' attacked Bentley in an article mainly patched up out of thefts from Boyle's book on Phalaris, and a reply appeared, called 'The Apothecary's Defence of Dr Bentley, in answer to the Spy.' 'Let me now tell it the Spy as a secret,' says the Apothecary, 'that Dr Bentley has the greatest deference for his noble antagonist (Boyle), both as a person of eminent parts and quality; and I dare say his noble antagonist thinks of Dr Bentley as of a person as great in critical learning as England has boasted of for many a century.' We remember Bentley's description of Boyle as 'a young gentleman of great hopes,' and gladly believe that the Apothecary was as well-informed as his tone would imply. Atterbury was in later life on excellent terms with Bentley.

It is long enough now since 'the sprinkling of a little dust' allayed the last throb of angry passion that had been roused by the Battle of the Books: but we look back across the years, and see more than the persons of the quarrel; it was the beginning of a new epoch in criticism; and it is marked by a work which, to this hour, is classical in a twofold sense, in relation to the literature of England and to the philology of Europe.

## CHAPTER VI.

### TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

TOWARDS the end of 1699, about eight months after the publication of Bentley's Dissertation on Phalaris, the Mastership of Trinity College, Cambridge, became vacant by the removal of Dr Mountague to the Deanery of Durham. The nomination of a successor rested with six Commissioners, to whom King William had entrusted the duty of advising in the ecclesiastical and academic patronage of the Crown. They were Archbishops Tenison and Sharp, with Bishops Lloyd, Burnet, Patrick and Moore,—the last-named in place of Stillingfleet, who had died in April, 1699. On their unanimous recommendation, the post was given to Bentley. He continued to hold the office of King's Librarian; but his home thenceforth was at Cambridge.

No places in England have suffered so little as Oxford and Cambridge from the causes which tend to merge local colour in a monochrome. The academic world which Bentley entered is still, after a hundred and eighty years, comparatively near to us, both in form and in spirit. The visitor in 1700, whom the coach conveyed in twelve hours from the 'Bull' in Bishopsgate

Street to the 'Rose' in the Marketplace of Cambridge, found a scene of which the essential features were the same as they are to-day. The most distinctive among the older buildings of the University had long been such as we now see them; already for nearly two centuries the chapel of King's College had been standing in the completeness of its majestic beauty; the charm of the past could already be felt in the quadrangles and cloisters of many an ancient house, in pleasant shades and smooth lawns by the quiet river, in gardens with margins of bright flowers bordering time-stained walls, over which the sound of bells from old towers came like an echo of the middle age, in all the haunts which tradition linked with domestic memories of cherished names. It was only the environment of the University that was decidedly unlike the present. In the narrow streets of the little town, where feeble oil-lamps flickered at night, the projecting upper stories of the houses on either side approached each other so nearly overhead as partly to supply the place of umbrellas. The few shops that existed were chiefly open booths, with the goods displayed on a board which also served as a shutter to close the front. That great wilderness of peat-moss which once stretched from Cambridge to the Wash had not yet been drained with the thoroughness which has since reclaimed two thousand square miles of the best corn-land in England; tracts of fen still touched the outskirts of the town; snipe and marsh-fowl were plentiful in the present suburbs. To the south and south-east the country was unenclosed, as it remained, in great measure, down to the beginning of this century. A horseman might ride for miles without seeing a fence.

The broadest difference between the University life

of Bentley's time and of our own might perhaps be roughly described by saying that, for the older men, it had more resemblance, both in its rigours and in its laxities, to the life of a monastery, and, for the younger men, to the life of a school. The College day began with morning chapel, usually at six. Breakfast was not a regular meal, but, from about 1700, it was often taken at a coffee-house where the London newspapers could be read. Morning lectures began at seven or eight in the College hall. Tables were set apart for different subjects. At 'the logick table' one lecturer is expounding Duncan's treatise, while another, at 'the ethick table,' is interpreting Puffendorf on the Duty of a Man and a Citizen; classics and mathematics engage other groups. The usual College dinner-hour, which had long been 11 A.M., had advanced before 1720 to noon. The afternoon disputations in the Schools often drew large audiences to hear 'respondent' and 'opponent' discuss such themes as 'Natural Philosophy does not tend to atheism,' or 'Matter cannot think.' Evening chapel was usually at five; a slight supper was provided in hall at seven or eight; and at eight in winter, or nine in summer, the College gates were locked. All students lodged within College walls. Some tutors held evening lectures in their rooms. Discipline was stern. The birch-rod which was still hung up at the butteries typified a power in the College dean similar to that which the fasces announced in the Roman Consul; and far on in the seventeenth century it was sometimes found to be more than an austere symbol, when a youth showed himself, as Anthony Wood has it, 'too forward, pragmatic, and conceited.' Boating, in the athletic sense, was hardly known till about 1820, and the first record of cricket in



its present form is said to be the match of Kent against England in 1746; but the undergraduates of Bentley's day played tennis, racquets, and bowls; they rang peals on church-bells; they gave concerts; nay we hear that the votaries 'of Handel and Corelli' (the Italian violinist) were not less earnest than those of Newton and Locke. In Bentley's Cambridge the sense of a corporate life was strengthened by continuous residence. Many Fellows of Colleges, and some undergraduates, never left the University from one year's end to another. An excursion to the Bath or to Epsom Wells was the equivalent of a modern vacation-tour. No reading-party had yet penetrated to the Lakes or the Highlands. No summer fêtes yet brought an influx of guests; the nearest approach to anything of the kind was the annual Sturbridge Fair in September, held in fields near the Cam, just outside the town. The seclusion of the University world is curiously illustrated by the humorous speeches which old custom allowed on certain public occasions. The sallies of the academic satirist were to the Cambridge of that period very much what the Old Comedy was for the Athens of Aristophanes. The citizens of a compact commonwealth could be sufficiently entertained by lively criticism of domestic affairs, or by pointed allusions to the conduct of familiar persons.

In relation to the studies of Cambridge the moment of Bentley's arrival was singularly opportune. The theories of Descartes had just been exploded by that Newtonian philosophy which Bentley's Boyle Lectures had first popularised; in alliance with Newton's principles, a mathematical school was growing; and other sciences also were beginning to flourish. Between 1702 and 1727 the University was provided with chairs of

Astronomy, Anatomy, Geology, and Botany; while the academic study of Medicine was also placed on a better footing. George I. founded the chair of Modern History in 1724. For classical learning the latter part of the seventeenth century had been a somewhat sterile period. There was thus a twofold function for a man of comprehensive vigour, holding an eminent station in the University,—to foster the new learning, and to reanimate the old. Bentley proved himself equal to both tasks.

On February 1, 1700, the Fellows of Trinity College met in the chapel, for the purpose of admitting their new Master. Bentley took the Latin oath, promising (among other undertakings) that he would ‘observe in all things the Statutes of the College, and interpret them truly, sincerely, and according to their grammatical sense;’ that he would ‘rule and protect all and singular Fellows and Scholars, Pensioners, Sizars, Subsizars, and the other members of the College, according to the same Statutes and Laws, without respect of birth, condition, or person, without favour or ill-will;’ that, in the event of his resigning or being deposed, he would restore all that was due to the College ‘without controversy or tergiversation.’ He was then installed in the Master’s seat, and his reign began.

Bentley had just completed his thirty-eighth year. He had a genius for scholarship, which was already recognised. He had also that which does not always accompany it, a large enthusiasm for the advancement of learning. His powers of work were extraordinary, and his physical strength was equal to almost any demand which even he could make upon it. Seldom has a man of equal gifts been placed at so early an age in a station which offered such opportunities.

Henry VIII. founded Trinity College only a few weeks before his death. Two establishments, each more than two centuries old, then stood on the site of the present Great Court. One of these was Michael-house, founded in 1324 by Hervey de Stanton, Chancellor to Edward II. The other, King's Hall, was founded in 1337 by Edward III, who assigned it to the King's Scholars, thirty or forty students, maintained at Cambridge by a royal bounty, first granted by Edward II. in 1316. Thus, while Michael-house was the older College, King's Hall represented the older foundation. When Henry VIII. united them, the new name, 'Trinity College,' was probably taken from Michael-house, which, among other titles, had been dedicated to the Holy and Undivided Trinity. The Reformation had been a crisis in the history of the English Universities. In 1546 their fortunes were almost at the lowest ebb. That fact adds significance to the terms in which Henry's charter traces the noble plan of Trinity College. The new house is to be a 'college of literature, the sciences, philosophy, good arts, and sacred Theology.' It is founded 'to the glory and honour of Almighty God and the Holy and Undivided Trinity; for the amplification and establishment of the Christian faith; the extirpation of heresy and false opinion; the increase and continuance of Divine Learning and all kinds of good letters; the knowledge of the tongues; the education of youth in piety, virtue, learning and science; the relief of the poor, destitute and afflicted; the prosperity of the Church of Christ; and the common good of his kingdom and subjects.'

The King had died before this conception could be embodied in legislative enactment. Statutes were made for Trinity College in the reign of Edward VI., and again in the reign of Mary. Manuscript copies of

these are preserved in the Muniment-room of the College; but the first printed code of Statutes was that given in the second year of Elizabeth. These governed Trinity College until a revision produced the 'Victorian' Statutes of 1844. Two features of the Elizabethan Statutes deserve notice. All the sixty Fellowships are left open, without appropriation to counties,—while at every other Cambridge College, except King's, territorial restrictions existed till this century. And, besides the College Lecturers, maintenance is assigned to three University Readers. These are the Regius Professors of Divinity, Hebrew and Greek, who are still on Henry VIII.'s foundation. Thus, from its origin, Trinity College was specially associated with two ideas:—free competition of merit; and provision, not only for collegiate tuition, but also for properly academic teaching.

During the first century of its life—from the reign of Edward VI. to the Civil Wars—the prosperity of Trinity College was brilliant and unbroken. The early days of the Great Rebellion were more disastrous for Cambridge than for Oxford; yet at Cambridge, as at Oxford, the period of the Commonwealth was one in which learning thrived. Trinity College was 'purged' of its royalist members in 1645. Dr Thomas Hill then became Master. He proved an excellent administrator. Isaac Barrow, who was an undergraduate of the College, had written an exercise on 'the Gunpowder Treason,' in which his Cavalier sympathies were frankly avowed. Some of the Fellows were so much incensed that they moved for his expulsion, when Hill silenced them with the words, 'Barrow is a better man than any of us.' The last Master of Trinity before the Restoration was Dr John Wilkins, brother-in-law of Oliver Cromwell, and formerly Warden of Wadham College, Oxford; who was 'always



zealous to promote worthy men and generous designs.' He was shrewdly suspected of being a royalist, and Cromwell had been wont to greet his visits thus:—'What, brother Wilkins, I suppose you are come to ask something or other in favour of the Malignants?' But his influence is said to have decided the Protector against confiscating the revenues of Oxford and Cambridge to pay his army\*.

In the space of forty years between the Restoration and Bentley's arrival, Trinity College had suffered some decline; not through any default of eminent abilities or worthy characters, but partly from general influences of the time, partly from the occasional want of a sufficiently firm rule. Dr. John Pearson,—the author of the treatise on the Creed,—was Master of Trinity from 1662 to 1673. A contemporary—whose words plainly show the contrast with Bentley which was in his mind—said that Pearson was 'a man the least apt to encroach upon anything that belonged to the Fellows, but treated them all with abundance of civility and condescension.' 'The Fellows, he has heard, ask'd him whether he wanted anything in his lodge,—table-linen, or the like;' "No," saith the good man, "I think not; this I have will serve yet;" and though pressed by his wife to have new, especially as it was offered him, he would refuse it while the old was fit for use. He was very well contented with what the College allowed him.'

\* See a letter, preserved in the Muniment-room of Trinity College, Cambridge, and published by Mr W. Aldis Wright in *Notes and Queries*, Aug. 13, 1881. I may remark that Dr. Creighton, whose recollections in old age the letter reports, errs in one detail. It must have been as Warden of Wadham, not as Master of Trinity, that Wilkins interceded against the confiscation. Oliver Cromwell died Sept. 3, 1658. It was early in 1659 that Richard Cromwell appointed Wilkins to Trinity College.



Pearson was succeeded in the mastership by Isaac Barrow, who held it for only four years—from 1673 to his death in 1677. Both as a mathematician and as a theologian he stood in the foremost rank. In 1660 he was elected ‘without a competitor’ to the professorship of Greek. Thus a singular triad of distinctions is united in his person; as Lucasian professor of Mathematics, he was the predecessor of Newton; at Trinity College, of Bentley; and, in his other chair, of Porson. In early boyhood he was chiefly remarkable for his pugnacity, and for his aversion to books. When he was at Charterhouse, ‘his greatest recreation was in such sports as brought on fighting among the boys; in his after-time a very great courage remained...yet he had perfectly subdued all inclination to quarrelling; but a negligence of his cloaths did always continue with him.’ As Master of Trinity, ‘besides the particular assistance he gave to many in their studies, he concerned himself in everything that was for the interest of his College.’

The next two Masters were men of a different type. John North was the fifth son of Dudley, Lord North, and younger brother of Francis North, first Baron Guilford, Lord Keeper in the reigns of Charles II. and James II. He had been a Fellow of Jesus College, and in 1677 he was appointed Master of Trinity. John North was a man of cultivated tastes and considerable accomplishments, of a gentle, very sensitive disposition, and of a highly nervous temperament. Even after he was a Fellow of his College, he once mistook a moonlit towel for ‘an enorm spectre;’ and his brother remembers how, at a still later period, ‘one Mr Wagstaff, a little gentleman, had an express audience, at a very good dinner, on the subject of spectres, and much was said *pro* and *con*.’ On one occasion he travelled into Wales, ‘to visit and be

possessed of his sinecure of Llandinon.' 'The parishioners came about him and hugged him, calling him their pastor, and telling him they were his sheep;' when 'he got him back to his College as fast as he could.' In the Mastership of Trinity North showed no weakness. Certain abuses had begun to infect the election to Fellowships, and he made a vigorous effort to remedy them. He was no less firm in his endeavours to revive discipline, which had been somewhat relaxed since the Restoration. One day he was in the act of admonishing two students, when he fell down in a fit. The two young men were 'very helpful' in carrying him to the Lodge. Paralysis of one side ensued. He lived for upwards of three years, but could thenceforth take little part in College affairs; and died, six years after he had become Master, in 1683.

Dr John Mountague, North's successor, was the fourth son of Edward, first Earl of Sandwich. The little that is known of Mountague exhibits him as an amiable person of courtly manners, who passed decently along the path of rapid preferment which then awaited a young divine with powerful connections. Having first been Master of Sherburn Hospital at Durham, he was appointed, in 1683, to the Mastership of Trinity. His easy temper and kindly disposition made him popular with the Fellows,—all the more so, perhaps, if his conscience was less exacting than that of the highly-strung, anxious North. In 1699 he returned, as Dean of Durham, to the scene of his earlier duties, and lived to see the fortunes of the College under Bentley. He died in London, in 1728. There was a double disadvantage for Bentley in coming after such a man; the personal contrast was marked; and those tendencies which North strove to repress had not suffered, under Mountague,

from any interference which exceeded the limits of good breeding.

In the fore-front of the difficulties which met Bentley Dr Monk puts the fact that he 'had no previous connection with the College which he was sent to govern; he was himself educated in another and a rival society.' Now, without questioning that there were murmurs on this score, I think that we shall overrate the influence of such a consideration if we fail to observe what the precedents had been up to that date. Bentley was the twentieth Master since 1546. Of his nineteen predecessors, only five had been educated at Trinity College. To take the four immediately preceding cases, Barrow and Mountague had been of Trinity, but Pearson had been of King's, and North of Jesus. Since Bentley's time every Master has been of Trinity. But it cannot be said that any established usage then existed of which Bentley's appointment was a breach. And young though he was for such a post,—thirty-eight,—he was not young beyond recent example. Pearson, when appointed, had been forty; Barrow, forty-three; North, thirty-three; and Mountague, only twenty-eight. Thus the choice was not decidedly exceptional in either of the two points which might make it appear so now. But the task which, at that moment, awaited a Master of Trinity was one which demanded a rare union of qualities. How would Bentley succeed? A few readers of the Dissertation on Phalaris, that mock despot of Agrigentum, might tremble a little, perhaps, at the thought that the scholarly author appeared to have a robust sense of what a real tyrant should be, and a cordial contempt for all shams in the part. It was natural, however, to look with hope to his mental grasp and vigour, his energy, his penetration, his genuine love of learning.

## CHAPTER VII.

### BENTLEY AS MASTER OF TRINITY.

WHEN Bentley entered on his new office, he was in one of those positions where a great deal may depend on the impression made at starting. He did not begin very happily. One of his first acts was to demand part of a College dividend due by usage to his predecessor, Dr Mountague, who closed the discussion by waiving his claim. Then the Master's Lodge required repairs, and the Seniority (the eight Senior Fellows) had voted a sum for that purpose, but the works were executed in a manner which ultimately cost about four times the amount. It is easy to imagine the comments and comparisons to which such things would give rise in a society not, perhaps, too favourably prepossessed towards their new chief. But Bentley's first year at Trinity is marked by at least one event altogether fortunate,—his marriage. At Bishop Stillingfleet's house he had met Miss Joanna Bernard, daughter of Sir John Bernard, of Brampton, Huntingdonshire. 'Being now raised to a station of dignity and consequence, he succeeded in obtaining the object of his affections,' says Dr Monk—who refuses to believe a story that the engagement was nearly broken off owing to a doubt expressed by Bentley with regard

to the authority of the Book of Daniel. Whiston has told us what this alleged doubt was. Nebuchadnezzar's golden image is described as sixty cubits high and six cubits broad ; now, said Bentley, this is out of all proportion ; it ought to have been ten cubits broad at least ; 'Which made the good lady weep.' The lovers' difference was possibly arranged on the basis suggested by Whiston, —that the sixty cubits included the pedestal. Some letters which passed between Dr Bentley and Miss Bernard, before their marriage, are still extant, and have been printed by Dr Luard at the end of Rud's *Diary*. In the Library of Trinity College is preserved a small printed and interleaved 'Ephemeris' for the year 1701. The blank page opposite the month of January has the following entries in Bentley's hand :—

Jan. 4. I married Mrs Johanna Bernard, daughter of S<sup>r</sup> John Bernard, Baronet. D<sup>r</sup> Richardson, Fellow of Eaton College and Master of Peterhouse, married us at Windsor in y<sup>e</sup> College Chapel.

6. I brought my wife to S<sup>t</sup> James's. [*i.e.* to his Lodgings, as King's Librarian, in the Palace.]

27. I am 39 years old, complete.

28. I returned to ye College.

It was a thoroughly happy marriage, through forty years of union. What years they were, too, outside of the home in which Mrs Bentley's gentle presence dwelt ! In days when evil tongues were busy, no word is said of her but in praise ; and perhaps, if all were known, few women ever went through more in trying, like Mrs Thrale, to be civil for two.

Bentley was Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge at the time of his marriage. His year of office brought him into collision with the gaieties of that great East England



carnival, Sturbridge Fair. Its entertainments were under the joint control of the University and the Town, but, without licence from the Vice-Chancellor, some actors had been announced to play in September, 1701. Bentley interposed his veto, and provided for discipline by investing sixty-two Masters of Arts with the powers of Proctors. One of his last acts as Vice-Chancellor was to draw up an address which the University presented to King William, expressing 'detestation of the indignity' which Louis XIV. had just offered to the English Crown by recognising the claims of the Pretender.

The term of his University magistracy having expired, Bentley was able to bestow undivided attention on Trinity College. An important reform was among his earliest measures. Fellowships and Scholarships were at that time awarded by a merely oral examination. Written papers were now introduced; the competition for Scholarships became annual instead of biennial, and freshmen were admitted to it. The permanent value of this change is not affected by the estimate which may be formed of Bentley's personal conduct in College elections. There are instances in which it was represented as arbitrary and unfair. But we must remember that his behaviour was closely watched by numerous enemies, who eagerly pressed every point which could be plausibly urged against him. The few detailed accounts which we have of the elections give the impression that, in those cases at least, the merits of candidates were fairly considered. Thus John Byrom says (1709):—'We were examined by the Master, Vice Master, and Dr Smith, one of the Seniors. On Wednesday we made theme for Dr Bentley, and on Thursday the Master and Seniors met in the Chapel for the election [to scholarships.] Dr Smith

had the gout and was not there. They stayed consulting about an hour and a half, and then the Master wrote the names of the elect and gave them to the Chapel Clerk.' Whether he was or was not always blameless on such occasions, Bentley deserves to be remembered as the Master who instituted a better machinery for testing merit, and provided better guarantees for its recognition.

To do him justice, no man could have been more earnest than Bentley was in desiring to maintain the prestige of Trinity College, or more fully sensible of the rank due to it in science and letters. It was through Bentley's influence that the newly-founded Plumian Professorship of Astronomy was conferred on Roger Cotes—then only a Bachelor of Arts—who was provided with an observatory in the rooms over the Great Gate of Trinity College (1706). Ten years later, when this man of wonderful promise died at the age of thirty-four, Newton said—'Had Cotes lived, we should have known something.' The appointment of Cotes may be regarded as marking the formal establishment of a Newtonian school in Cambridge; and it was of happy omen that it should have been first lodged within the walls which had sheltered the labours of the founder. Three English Sovereigns visited the College in the course of Bentley's Mastership, but the most interesting fact connected with any of these occasions is the public recognition of Newton's scientific eminence in 1705, when he received knighthood from Queen Anne at Trinity Lodge. Then it was Bentley who fitted up a chemical laboratory in Trinity College for Vigani, a native of Verona, who, after lecturing in Cambridge for some years, was appointed Professor of Chemistry in 1702. It was Bentley who made Trinity College the home of the

eminent oriental scholar Sike, of Bremen, whom he helped to obtain the Regius Chair of Hebrew in 1703. Briefly, wherever real science needed protection or encouragement, there, in Bentley's view, was the opportunity of Trinity College; it was to be indeed a house of the sciences and 'of all kinds of good letters'; it was to be not only a great College, but, in its own measure, a true University.

This noble conception represents the good side of Bentley's Mastership; he did something towards making it a reality; he did more still towards creating, or re-animating, a tradition that this is what Trinity College was meant to be, and that nothing lower than this is the character at which it should aim. Nor is it without significance that Nevile's care for the external embellishment of the College was resumed by Bentley. The Chapel, begun in 1557 and finished in Elizabeth's reign, was through Bentley's efforts entirely refitted, and furnished with a fine organ by Bernard Smith. This work was completed in 1727. The grounds beyond the river, acquired by Nevile, were first laid out by Bentley; and the noble avenue of limes, planted in 1674 on the west side of the Cam, was continued in 1717 from the bridge to the College.

But unfortunately it was his resolve to be absolute, and he proclaimed it in a manner which was altogether his own. The College Bursar (a Fellow) having protested against the lavish outlay on the repairs of the Master's Lodge, Bentley said that he would 'send him into the country to feed his turkeys.' When the Fellows opposed him in the same matter, he alluded to his power, under the Statutes, of forbidding them to leave the College, and cried, 'Have you forgotten my rusty sword?' The

Fellow who held the office of Junior Bursar had demurred to paying for a hen-house which had been put in the Master's yard; Bentley, doubtless in allusion to Lafontaine's fable of 'the Old Lion,' replied, 'I will not be kicked by an *ass*,'—and presently strained his prerogative by stopping the Junior Bursar's commons. Remonstrances being made, he grimly rejoined, 'Tis all but *lusus jocusque* (mere child's-play); I am not warm yet.' Criticising a financial arrangement which was perfectly legitimate, but of which he disapproved, he accused the Seniors of 'robbing the Library,' and 'putting the money in their own pockets.' He harassed the society by a number of petty regulations, in which we may give him credit for having aimed at a tonic effect, but which were so timed and executed as to be highly vexatious. Thus, in order to force the Fellows to take the higher degrees, he procured the decision, after a struggle, that any Bachelor or Doctor of Divinity should have a right to College rooms or a College living before a Master of Arts, even though the latter was senior on the list of Fellows. As a measure of retrenchment, he abolished the entertainment of guests by the College at the great festivals. Taking the dead letter of the statutes in its rigour, he decreed that the College Lecturers should be fined if they omitted to perform certain daily exercises in the hall, which were no longer needful or valuable; he also enforced, in regard to the thirty junior Fellows, petty fines for absence from chapel (which were continued to recent times). On several occasions he took into his own hands a jurisdiction which belonged to him only jointly with the eight Seniors. Thus, in one instance, he expelled two Fellows of the College by his sole fiat.

If Bentley is to be credited with the excellence of



the intentions which declared themselves in such a form, recognition is certainly due to the forbearance shown by the Fellows of Trinity. Bentley afterwards sought to represent them as worthless men who resented his endeavours to reform them. It cannot be too distinctly said that this was totally unjust. The Fellows, as a body, were liable to no such charges as Bentley in his anger brought against them; not a few of them were eminent in the University; and if there were any whose lives would not bear scrutiny, they were at most two or three, usually non-resident, and always without influence. It may safely be said that no large society of that time, in either University, would have sustained an inspection with more satisfactory results. The average College Fellow of that period was a moderately accomplished clergyman, whose desire was to repose in decent comfort on a small freehold. Bentley swooped on a large house of such persons,—not ideal students, yet, on the whole, decidedly favourable specimens of their kind; he made their lives a burden to them, and then denounced them as the refuse of humanity when they dared to lift their heads against his insolent assumption of absolute power. They bore it as long as flesh and blood could. For nearly eight years they endured. At last, in December, 1709, things came to a crisis,—almost by an accident.

Bentley had brought forward a proposal for redistributing the divisible income of the College according to a scheme of his own, one feature of which was that the Master should receive a dividend considerably in excess of his legitimate claims. Even Bentley's authority failed to obtain the acquiescence of the Seniors in this novel interpretation of the maxim, *divide et impera*.



They declined to sanction the scheme. While the discussion was pending, Edmund Miller, a lay Fellow, came up to spend the Christmas vacation at Trinity. As an able barrister, who understood College business, he was just such an ally as the Fellows needed. He found them, he says, 'looking like so many prisoners, which were uncertain whether to expect military execution, or the favour of decimation.' At a meeting of the Master and Seniors, it was agreed to hear Miller, as a representative of the junior Fellows, on the dividend question. Miller denounced the plan to Bentley's face, who replied by threatening to deprive him of his Fellowship. A few days later, an open rupture took place between the Seniors and Bentley, who left the room exclaiming, 'Henceforward, farewell peace to Trinity College.' Miller now drew up a declaration, which was signed by twenty-four resident Fellows, including the Seniors. It expressed a desire that Bentley's conduct should be represented 'to those who are the proper judges thereof, and in such manner as counsel shall advise.' Bentley, against the unanimous vote of the Seniors, and on a technical quibble of his own, now declared Miller's Fellowship void. Miller appealed to the Vice-Master, who, supported by all the Seniors, replaced him on the list. The Master again struck out his name. Miller now left for London. Bentley soon followed. Both sides were resolved on war.

Who were 'the proper judges' of Bentley's conduct? The 46th chapter of Edward VI.'s Statutes for Trinity College recognised the Bishop of Ely as General Visitor. The Elizabethan Statutes omit this, but in their 40th chapter, which provides for the removal of the Master in case of necessity, incidentally speak of the Bishop as

Visitor. Bentley, six years before (1703), had himself appealed to the Bishop of Ely on a point touching the Master's prerogative. No other precedent existed. Acting on this, the Fellows, in February, 1710, laid their 'humble petition and complaint' before the Bishop of Ely. They brought, in general terms, a charge of malversation against Bentley, and promised to submit 'the several particulars' within a convenient time. Bentley now published a 'Letter to the Bishop of Ely,' in which he made a most gross attack on the collective character of the Fellows,—describing their Petition as 'the last struggle and effort of vice and idleness against virtue, learning, and good discipline.' In July, the Fellows presented 'the several particulars' to the Bishop, in the form of an accusation comprising fifty-four counts. The Statute prescribed that an accused Master should be 'examined' before the Visitor. Hence each of the counts is interrogative. For example:—

'~~Why~~ have you for many Years last past, wasted the College Bread, Ale, Beer, Coals, Wood, Turfe, Sedge, Charcoal, Linnen, Pewter, Corn, Flower, Brawn, and Bran? &c.'

'~~When~~ by false and base Practices, as by threatening to bring Letters from Court, Visitations, and the like; and at other times, by boasting of your great Interest and Acquaintance, and that you were the Genius of the Age, and what great things you would do for the College in general, and for every Member of it in particular, and promising that you would for the future live peaceably with them, and never make any farther Demands, you had prevailed with the Senior Fellows to allow you several hundred Pounds for your Lodge, more than they first intended or agreed for, to the great Dissatisfaction of the College, and the wonder of the whole University, and all that heard of it: ~~Why~~ did you the very next Year, about that time, merely for your own Vanity, require

them to build you a new Stair-case in your Lodge? And when they (considering how much you had extorted from them before, which you had never accounted for) did for good reason deny to do it; *Why* did you of your own Head pull down a good Stair-case in your Lodge, and give Orders and Directions for building a new one, and that too fine for common Use?’

‘*Why* did you use scurrilous Words and Language to several of the Fellows, particularly by calling Mr *Eden* an Ass, and Mr *Rashly* the College Dog, and by telling Mr *Cock* he would die in his Shoes?’

Dr Moore, the learned Bishop of Ely, was one of the six Commissioners who had nominated Bentley for the Mastership; he sympathised with his studies; and Bentley had been Archdeacon of the diocese since 1701. The judge, then, could hardly be suspected of any bias against the accused. He sent a copy of the accusation to Bentley, who ignored it for some months. In November the Bishop wrote again, requiring a reply by December 18. Bentley then petitioned the Queen, praying that the Bishop of Ely might be restrained from usurping the functions of Visitor. The Visitor of Trinity College, Bentley contended, was the Sovereign. Mr Secretary St John at once referred Bentley’s contention to the Law Officers of the Crown, and meanwhile the Bishop was inhibited from proceeding. This was at the end of 1710.

Bentley’s move was part of a calculation. In 1710 the Tories had come in under Harley and St John. Mrs Bentley was related to St John, and also to Mr Masham, whose wife had succeeded the Duchess of Marlborough in the Queen’s favour. Bentley reckoned on commanding sufficient influence to override the Bishop’s jurisdiction by a direct interposition of the Crown. He was disappointed. The Attorney General and the Solicitor General reported that, in their opinion, the Bishop of Ely

was Visitor of Trinity College in matters concerning the Master; adding that Bentley could, if he pleased, try the question in a court of law. This was not what Bentley desired. He now wrote to the Prime Minister, Harley, who had recently escaped assassination, and, with the office of Lord High Treasurer, had been created Earl of Oxford. Bentley's letter is dated July 12, 1711. 'I desire nothing more,' he writes, 'than that her Majesty would send down commissioners to examine into all matters upon the place,...and to punish where the faults shall be found...I am easy under everything but loss of time by detainment here in town, which hinders me from putting my last hand to my edition of Horace, and from doing myself the honour to inscribe it to your Lordship's great name.' The Premier did his best. He referred the report of the Attorney and Solicitor to the Lord Keeper, Sir Simon Harcourt, and Queen's Counsel. In January, 1712, they expressed their opinion that the Sovereign is the General Visitor of Trinity College, but that the Bishop of Ely is Special Visitor in the case of charges brought against the Master. The Minister now tried persuasion with the Fellows. Could they not concur with the Master in referring their grievances to the Crown? The Fellows declined. A year passed. Bentley tried to starve out the College by refusing to issue a dividend. In vain. The Ministry were threatened with a revision, in the Queen's Bench, of their veto on the Bishop. They did not like this prospect. On April 18, 1713, Bolingbroke, as Secretary of State, authorised the Bishop of Ely to proceed.

Bentley's ingenuity was not yet exhausted. He proposed that the trial should be held forthwith at Cambridge, where all the College books were ready to hand. Had



this been done, he must certainly have been acquitted, since the prosecutors had not yet worked up their case. Some of the Fellows unwarily consented. But the Bishop appointed Ely House in London as the place of trial, and the month of November, 1713, as the time. Various causes of delay intervened. At last, in May, 1714, the trial came on in the great hall of Ely House. Five counsel, including Miller, were employed for the Fellows, and three for Bentley. Bishop Moore had two eminent lawyers as his assessors,—Lord Cowper, an ex-chancellor, and Dr Newton. Public feeling was at first with Bentley, as a distinguished scholar and divine. But the prosecutors had a strong case. An anecdote of the trial is given by Bentley's grandson, Cumberland. One day the Bishop intimated, from his place as judge, that he condemned the Master's conduct. For once, Bentley's iron nerve failed him. He fainted in court.

After lasting six weeks, the trial ended about the middle of June. Both sides now awaited with intense anxiety the judgment of the Bishop and his assessors. The prosecutors were confident. But week after week elapsed in silence. The Bishop had caught a chill during the sittings. On July 31, he died. The next day, August 1, 1714, London was thrilled by momentous news. Queen Anne was no more. The British Crown had passed to the House of Hanover. Ministers had fallen; new men were coming to power; the political world was wild with excitement; and the griefs of Trinity College would have to wait.

Bentley's escape had been narrow. After Bishop Moore's death, the judgment which he had prepared, but not pronounced, was found among his papers. 'By this our definitive sentence, we remove Richard Bentley



from his office of Master of the College.' Dr Monk thinks that the Bishop had meant this merely to frighten Bentley into a compromise with the Fellows. Possibly : though in that case the Bishop would have had to reckon with the other side. But in any case Bentley must have accepted the Bishop's terms, and these must have been such as would have satisfied the prosecutors. If not ejected, therefore, he would still have been defeated. As it was, he got off scot-free.

The new Bishop of Ely, Dr Fleetwood, took a different line from his predecessor. The Crown lawyers had held that the Bishop was Special Visitor, but not General Visitor. Dr Fleetwood said that, if he interfered at all, it must be as General Visitor, to do justice on all alike. This scared some of the weaker Fellows into making peace with Bentley, who kindly consented to drop his dividend scheme. In one sense the new Bishop's course was greatly to Bentley's advantage, since it raised the preliminary question over again. Miller vainly tried to move Dr Fleetwood. Meanwhile Bentley was acting as autocrat of the College,—dealing with its property and its patronage as he pleased. His conduct led to a fresh effort for redress.

The lead on this occasion was taken by Dr Colbatch, now a Senior Fellow. From the beginning of the feuds, Colbatch had been a counsellor of moderation, disapproving much in the stronger measures advocated by Miller. He was an able and accomplished man, whose rigid maintenance of his own principles extorted respect even where it did not command sympathy. Colbatch's early manhood had been expended on performing the duties of private tutor in two families of distinction, and he had returned to College at forty, more convinced

than ever that it is a mistake to put trust in princes. He was a dangerous enemy because he seemed incapable of revenge; it was always on high grounds that he desired the confusion of the wicked; and he pursued that object with the temperate implacability which belongs to a disappointed man of the world. Since the Bishop of Ely would not act unless as General Visitor, Colbatch drew up a petition, which nineteen Fellows signed, praying that it might be ascertained who was General Visitor. This was encouraged by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Wake,—who described Bentley as ‘the greatest instance of human frailty that I know of, as with such good parts and so much learning he can be so insupportable.’ The object of the petition was baulked for the time by the delays of the Attorney General. After three years the petition came before the Privy Council in May, 1719.

Bentley was equal to the occasion. Serjeant Miller had presented the petition, and could withdraw it. For five years Bentley had been making active war on Miller, and renewing the attempt to eject him from his Fellowship. Now, towards the end of 1719, he made peace with him, on singular terms. Miller was to withdraw the petition; to resign his Fellowship, in consideration of certain payments; and to receive the sum of £400 as costs on account of the former prosecution before Bishop Moore. Miller agreed. Bentley then proposed the compact to the Seniors. Five of the eight would have nothing to say to it. By a series of manœuvres, however, Bentley carried it at a subsequent meeting. Serjeant Miller received £528 from the College. Who shall describe the feelings of the belligerent Fellows, when the Serjeant’s strategy collapsed in this miserable Sedan? It was he who had made them

go to war; it was he who had led them through the mazes of the law; they had caught his clear accents, learned his great language; and here was the end of it! But this was not all. If the College is to pay costs on one side, the Master argued, it must pay them on both. Accordingly, Bentley himself received £500 for his own costs in the trial. And, anxious to make hay in this gleam of sunshine, he further prevailed on the Seniors to grant a handsome sum for certain furniture of the Master's Lodge. Bentley had no more to fear, at present, from the opposition of an organised party. For the next few years his encounters were single combats.

Such was the state of affairs in Trinity College. Meanwhile Bentley's relations with the University had come to an extraordinary pass. From the first days of his Mastership, his reputation, his ability and energy had made him influential in Cambridge, though he was not generally popular. We saw that, before his appointment to Trinity, he had taken a leading part in the reparation of the University Press. He continued to show an active interest in its management by serving on occasional committees; no permanent Press Syndicate was constituted till 1737. Politics were keen at the University in Bentley's time: a division in the academic Senate was often a direct trial of strength between Whig and Tory. When Bentley struck a blow in these University battles, it was almost always with a view to some advantage in his own College war. Two instances will illustrate this. In June, 1712, when acting as Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Bentley carried in the Senate an address to Queen Anne, congratulating her on the progress of the peace negotiations at Utrecht. The address was meant as a manifesto in support of the Tory Ministry, whom the Whigs had

just been attacking on this score in the Lords. At that time, Harley, the Tory Premier, was the protector on whom Bentley relied in his College troubles. The irritation of the Whig party in the University may have been one cause of a severe reflection passed on Bentley soon afterwards. The Senate resolved that no Arch-deacon of Ely should thenceforth be eligible as Vice-Chancellor; a decree which, however, was rescinded two years later. Then in 1716 Bentley sorely needed the countenance of the Whig Government against the revived hostilities in Trinity. By a surprise, he carried through the Senate an address to George I., congratulating him on the recent suppression of the Jacobite risings. A letter of Bentley's describes the Cambridge Tories as being 'in a desperate rage,'—not wholly, perhaps, without provocation.

It was shortly before this,—in the early days of the Jacobite rebellion, when visions of a Roman Catholic reign were agitating the public imagination,—that Bentley preached before the University, on the fifth of November, 1715, his 'Sermon on Popery,'—from which a passage on the tortures of the Inquisition has been transferred by Sterne to the pages of Tristram Shandy, and deeply moves Corporal Trim. Bentley had then lately received the unusual honour of being publicly thanked by the Senate for his reply to 'A Discourse of Free-Thinking' by Anthony Collins. When the Regius Professorship of Divinity—the most valuable in the University—fell vacant in 1717, few persons, perhaps, would have questioned Dr Bentley's claims on the grounds of ability and learning. But the Statute had declared that the Professor must not hold any other office in the University or in Trinity College. Two



precedents were alleged to show that a Master of Trinity might hold the Professorship, but they were not unexceptionable. Of the seven electors, three certainly—presumably five—were against the Master of Trinity's pretensions. The favourite candidate was Dr Ashton, Master of Jesus; and there are letters to him which show the strong feeling in the University against his rival. On the whole, most men would have despaired. Not so Bentley. By raising a legal point, he contrived to stave off the election for a few weeks; and then seized a propitious moment. The Vice-Chancellor was one of the seven electors. It was arranged that Mr Grigg, who held that office, should leave Cambridge for a few days, naming Bentley Deputy Vice-Chancellor. On the day of election, the Master of Trinity was chosen Regius Professor of Divinity by four out of seven votes, one of the four being that of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. It was in this candidature that Dr Bentley delivered an admired discourse on the three heavenly witnesses, which denied the authenticity of that text. It is no longer extant, but had been seen by Porson, who himself wrote on the subject.

This was in May, 1717. Not long afterwards Bentley had occasion to appear publicly in his new character of Regius Professor. Early in October, George I. was staying at Newmarket. On Friday, the 4th, his Majesty consented to visit Cambridge on the following Sunday. There was not much time for preparation, but it was arranged to confer the degree of Doctor of Laws on twenty-seven of the royal retinue, and that of Doctor of Divinity on thirty-two members of the University. On Sunday morning Mr Grigg, the Vice-Chancellor, presented himself at Trinity Lodge, there to await the



arrival of the Chancellor, 'the proud Duke of Somerset.' Bentley was unprepared for this honour; he was 'in his morning gown,' busied with meditations of hospitality or of eloquence; in fact, he remonstrated; but Mr Grigg remained. At last the Chancellor came. Bentley was affable, but a little *distract*. 'While he entertained the Duke in discourse,' (says one who was present,) 'there stood the Earl of Thomond and Bishop of Norwich, unregarded: and there they might have stood, if one of the Beadles had not touched his sleeve a little; and then he vouchsafed them a welcome also.' But worse was to come. George I. attended service at King's College Chapel. When it was over, the Vice-Chancellor proceeded to conduct his Majesty back to Trinity College. But Mr Grigg was desirous that royal eyes should behold his own College, Clare Hall, and therefore chose a route which led to a closed gate of Trinity College. Here a halt of some minutes took place in a muddy lane, before word could reach the principal entrance, where Bentley and an enthusiastic crowd were awaiting their Sovereign.

These little griefs, however, were nothing to the later troubles which this day's proceedings begat for Bentley. As it was thought that thirty-two new Doctors of Divinity might be too much for the King, Sunday's ceremonial had been limited to presenting a few of them as samples. Bentley, as Regius Professor of Divinity, had done his part admirably. But the next day, when the rest of the doctors were to be 'created' at leisure, Bentley flatly refused to proceed, unless each of them paid him a fee of four guineas, in addition to the customary broad-piece. As the degrees were honorary, the claim was sheer extortion. Some complied, others resisted. Conyers Middleton, the biographer of Cicero,

was at this time a resident in Cambridge, though no longer a Fellow of any College. He paid his four guineas, got his D.D. degree, and then sued Bentley for the debt in the Vice-Chancellor's Court, a tribunal of academic jurisdiction in such matters. After months of fruitless diplomacy, the Vice-Chancellor reluctantly issued a decree for Bentley's arrest at Middleton's suit. The writ was served on Bentley at Trinity Lodge,—not, however, before one of the Esquire Bedells had been treated with indignity. Bail was given for Bentley's appearance before the Court on October 3, 1718. He failed to appear. The Court then declared that he was suspended from all his degrees. A fortnight later, a Grace was offered to the Senate, proposing that Bentley's degrees should be not merely suspended but taken away. Bentley's friends did their utmost. To the honour of the Fellows of Trinity, only four of them voted against him. But the Grace was carried by more than two to one. Nine Heads of Colleges and twenty-three Doctors supported it.

When the Master of Trinity learned that he was no longer Richard Bentley, D.D., M.A., or even B.A., but simply Richard Bentley, he said, 'I have rubbed through many a worse business than this.' He instantly bestirred himself with his old vigour, petitioning the Crown, appealing to powerful friends, and dealing some hard knocks in the free fight of pamphlets which broke out on the question. For nearly six years, however, he remained under the sentence of degradation. During that period he brought actions of libel against his two principal adversaries, Colbatch, and Conyers Middleton. Colbatch suffered a week's imprisonment and a fine. Middleton was twice prosecuted; the first time, he had to apologise to Bentley, and pay costs; the second time he was fined.

During the years 1720—1723 Bentley had altogether six law-suits in the Court of King's Bench, and gained all of them. The last and most important was against the University, for having taken away his degrees. That act had undoubtedly been illegal. The four judges all took Bentley's part. On February 7, 1724, the Court gave judgment. The University received peremptory direction to restore Bentley's degrees. That command was obeyed, but with a significant circumstance. On March 25, 1724, the Vice-Chancellor was to lay the first stone of the new buildings designed for King's College. In order that Bentley might not participate as a Doctor in the ceremonial, the Grace restoring his degrees was offered to the Senate on March 26.

Thus, after fifteen years of almost incessant strife, the Master of Trinity had prevailed over opposition both in the College and in the University. He was sixty-two. His fame as a scholar was unrivalled. As a controversialist he had proved himself a match, in different fields, for wits, heretics, and lawyers. At Cambridge, where he was now the virtual leader of the Whig party in the Senate, his influence had become pre-eminent. And as if to show that he had passed through all his troubles without stain, it was in this year, 1724, that the Duke of Newcastle wrote and offered him the Bishopric of Bristol,—then rather a poor one. Bentley declined it, frankly observing that the revenues of the see would scarcely enable him to attend Parliament. When he was asked what preferment he would accept,—‘Such,’ he answered, ‘as would not induce me to desire an exchange.’

The remainder of this combative life, it might have been thought, would now be peaceful. But the last

chapter is the most curious of all. It can be briefly told. Dr Colbatch, the ablest of Bentley's adversaries in Trinity College, had never resigned the purpose of bringing the Master to justice. It had become the object for which he lived : private wrongs had sunk into his mind ; but he believed himself to be fulfilling a public duty. In 1726 he vainly endeavoured to procure intervention by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, on the ground of certain grievances suffered by the Westminster scholars at Trinity College. In 1728 he was more successful. Some Fellows of Trinity joined him in a fresh attempt to obtain a visitation of the College by the Bishop of Ely. There was, in fact, good reason for it. Bentley's rule had become practically absolute, and therefore unconstitutional. While Colbatch's new allies were preparing their measures, death nearly saved them the trouble. George II. had visited Cambridge, and had been received in full state at Trinity College. Bentley, who was subject to severe colds, had caught a chill during the ceremonies of the reception, in the course of which he had been called on to present no fewer than fifty-eight Doctors of Divinity. He was seized with fever. For some days his life was in most imminent danger. But he rallied, and, after taking the waters at Bath, recovered. Five Counsel having expressed an opinion that the Bishop of Ely was General Visitor of the College, Dr Greene, who now held that see, cited Bentley to appear before him. Bentley did so ; but presently obtained a rule from the Court of King's Bench, staying the Bishop's proceedings on the ground that the articles of accusation included matters not cognizable by the Bishop. The question of the Bishop's jurisdiction was next brought before the King's



Bench. The Court decided that the Bishop was in this cause Visitor, but again stayed his proceedings—this time on the ground of a technical informality. The prosecutors now appealed to the House of Lords. The House of Lords reversed the decision of the King's Bench, and empowered the Bishop to try Bentley on twenty of the sixty-four counts which had been preferred.

After the lapse of nearly twenty years, Bentley was once more arraigned at Ely House. This second trial began on June 13, 1733. On April 27, 1734, the Bishop gave judgment. Bentley was found guilty of dilapidating the College goods and violating the College Statutes. He was sentenced to be deprived of the Mastership.

At last the long chase was over and the prey had been run to earth. No shifts or doublings could save him now. It only remained to execute the sentence. The Bishop sent down to Cambridge three copies of his judgment. One was for Bentley. Another was to be posted on the gates of Trinity College. A third was to be placed in the hands of the Vice-Master.

The fortieth Statute of Elizabeth, on which the judgment rested, prescribes that the Master, if convicted by the Visitor, shall be deprived *by the agency of the Vice-Master*. It has been thought—and Monk adopts the view—that the word *Vice-Master* here is a mere clerical error for *Visitor*. The tenor of the Statute itself first led me to doubt this plausible theory. For it begins by saying that a peccant Master shall first be *admonished* by the Vice-Master and Seniors: *per Vice Magistrum* etc...*ad-moneatur*. If obdurate, he is then to be examined by the Visitor; and, if convicted, *per eundem Vice-Magistrum*



*Officio Magistri privetur.* This seems to mean:—‘let him be *deprived* by the same Vice-Master who had first *admonished* him.’ The Statute intended to provide for the *execution* of the sentence by the College itself, without the scandal of any external intervention beyond the purely *judicial* interposition of the Visitor. I have since learned that the late Francis Martin, formerly Vice-Master, discussed this point in a short paper (Nov. 12, 1857), which Dr Luard’s kindness has enabled me to see. Dr Monk had seen a copy of the statutes in which *Visitatorem* was written as a correction over *Vice-Magistrum*. He believed this copy to be the original one: and when in 1846 Martin showed him the really authentic copy—with Elizabeth’s signature and the Great Seal—in the Muniment-room, he at once said, ‘I never saw that book.’ There the words stand clearly *Vice-Magrm*, as in the statutes of Philip and Mary: there is no correction, superscript or marginal: and the vellum shows that there has been no erasure. The Vice-Master, who takes the chief part in admitting the Master (Stat. Cap. 2), is the natural minister of deprivation. Bentley’s Counsel advised the Vice-Master, Dr Hacket, to refrain from acting until he had taken legal opinion. Meanwhile Bentley continued to act as Master, to the indignation of his adversaries, and the astonishment of the world. An examination for College scholarships was going on just then. On such occasions in former years Bentley had often set the candidates to write on some theme suggestive of his own position. Thus, at the height of his monarchy, he gave them, from Virgil,—‘*No one of this number shall go away without a gift from me*’: and once, at a pinch in his wars, from Homer,—‘*Despoil others, but keep hands off Hector*.’ This time he had a very apposite text for

the young composers, from Terence: '*This is your plea now,—that I have been turned out: look you, there are ups and downs in all things.*' Dr Hacket, however, had no mind to stand long in the breach; and on May 17, 1734, he resigned the Vice-Mastership. He was succeeded by Dr Richard Walker, a friend on whom Bentley could rely. During the next four years, every resource which ingenuity could suggest was employed to force Dr Walker into executing the sentence of deprivation on Bentley. A petition was presented by Colbatch's party to the House of Lords, which the peers, after a debate, permitted to be withdrawn. Dr Walker now effected a compromise between Bentley and some of the hostile Fellows. But Colbatch persevered. Three different motions were made in the Court of King's Bench; first, for a writ to compel Dr Walker to act; next, for a writ to compel the Bishop of Ely to compel Dr Walker to act; then, for a writ to compel the Bishop to do his own duty as General Visitor. All in vain. On April 22, 1738, the Court rejected the last of these applications.

That day marks the end of the strife begun in February, 1710: it had thus lasted a year longer than the Peloponnesian War. It has two main chapters. The first is the fourteen years' struggle from 1710 to 1724, in which Miller was the leader down to his withdrawal in 1719. The years 1725—1727 were a pause. Then the ten years' struggle, from 1728 to 1738, was organised and maintained by Colbatch. Meanwhile many of the persons concerned were advanced in age. Three weeks after the King's Bench had refused the third mandamus, Bishop Greene died at the age of eighty. Dr Colbatch was seventy-five. Bentley himself was seventy-seven. If he had wanted another classical theme for the candi-

dates in the scholarship examination, he might have given them—‘*One man by his delay hath restored our fortunes.*’ He was under sentence of deprivation, but only one person could statutably deprive him; that person declined to move; and no one could make him move. Bentley therefore remained master of the field—and of the College.

We remember the incorrigible old gentleman in the play, whose habit of litigation was so strong that, when precluded from further attendance on the public law-courts, he got up a little law-court at home, and prosecuted his dog. Bentley’s occupation with the King’s Bench ceased in April, 1738. In July he proceeded against Dr Colbatch at Cambridge in the Consistorial Court of the Bishop of Ely, for the recovery of certain payments called ‘proxies,’ alleged to be due from Colbatch, as Rector of Orwell, to Bentley, as Archdeacon of the diocese. The process lasted eighteen months, at the end of which Dr Colbatch had to pay six years’ arrears and costs.

Looking back on Bentley’s long war with the Fellows, one asks, Who was most to blame? De Quincey approves Dr Parr’s opinion,—expressed long after Bentley’s death,—that the College was wrong, and Bentley right. But De Quincey goes further. Even granting that Bentley was wrong, De Quincey says, we ought to vote him right, ‘for by this means the current of one’s sympathy with an illustrious man is cleared of ugly obstructions.’ It is good to be in sympathy with an illustrious man, but it is better still to be just. The merits of the controversy between Bentley and the Fellows have two aspects, legal and moral. The legal question is simple. Had Bentley, as Master,

brought himself within the meaning of the fortieth Elizabethan Statute, and deserved the penalty of deprivation? Certainly he had. It was so found on two distinct occasions, twenty years apart, after a prolonged investigation by lawyers. Morally, the first question is: Was Bentley obliged to break the Statutes in order to keep some higher law? He certainly was not. It cannot be shown that the Statutes were in conflict with any project which he entertained for the good of the College; and, if they had been so, the proper course for him was not to violate them, but to move constitutionally for their alteration. A further moral question concerns the nature of his personal conduct towards the Fellows. This conduct might conceivably have been so disinterested and considerate as to give him some equitable claim on their forbearance, though they might feel bound to resist the course which he pursued. His conduct was, in fact, of an opposite character. On a broad view of the whole matter, from 1710 to 1738, the result is this. Legally, the College had been right, and Bentley wrong. Morally, there had been faults on both parts; but it was Bentley's intolerable behaviour which first, and after long forbearance, forced the Fellows into an active defence of the common interests. The words 'Farewell peace to Trinity College' were pronounced by Bentley. It is not a relevant plea that his academic ideal was higher than that of the men whose rights he attacked.

The College necessarily suffered for a time from these long years of domestic strife which had become a public scandal. Almost any other society, perhaps, would have been permanently injured. But Trinity College had the strength of unique traditions, deeply

rooted in the history of the country ; and the excellent spirit shown by its best men, in the time which immediately followed Bentley's, soon dispelled the cloud. When the grave had closed over those feuds, the good which Bentley had done lived in better tests of merit, and in the traditional association of the College with the encouragement of rising sciences.

Now we must turn to an altogether different side which, throughout these stormy years, is presented by the activity of this extraordinary man.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### LITERARY WORK AFTER 1700.—HORACE.

FROM the beginning of 1700 to the summer of 1702 Bentley was constantly occupied with University or College affairs. On August 2, 1702, he writes to Graevius at Utrecht: 'You must know that for the last two years I have hardly had two days free for literature.' This was perhaps the longest decisive interruption of literary work in his whole life. Nearly all his subsequent writings were finished in haste, and many of them were so timed as to appear at moments when he had a special reason for wishing to enlist sympathy. But his studies, as distinguished from his acts of composition, appear to have been seldom broken off for more than short spaces, even when he was most harassed by external troubles. His wonderful nerve and will enabled him to concentrate his spare hours on his own reading, at times when other men would have been able to think of nothing but threatened ruin.

His early years at Trinity College offer several instances of his generous readiness to help and encourage other scholars. One of these was Ludolph Küster, a young Westphalian then living at Cambridge, whom Bentley assisted with an edition of the Greek lexico-

grapher Suidas, and afterwards with an edition of Aristophanes. Another was a young Dutchman, destined to celebrity,—Tiberius Hemsterhuys. Bentley had sent him a kindly criticism on an edition of Julius Pollux, pointing out certain defects of metrical knowledge. The effect on Hemsterhuys has been described by his famous pupil, David Ruhnken. At first he was plunged in despair: then he roused himself to intense effort. To his dying day he revered Bentley, and would hear nothing against him. The story recalls that of F. Jacobs, the editor of the Greek Anthology, who was spurred into closer study of metre by the censures of Godfrey Hermann. In 1709 John Davies, Fellow of Queens' College, Cambridge, published an edition of Cicero's 'Tusculan Disputations,' with an appendix of critical notes by Bentley. The notes were disparaged in a review called the *Bibliothèque Choisie* by the Swiss John Le Clerc, then leader of the Arminians in Holland; a versatile but shallow man, who had touched the surface of philosophy, and was now ambitious of figuring on the surface of classical literature. Some months later Le Clerc edited the fragments of the Greek comic poets, Menander and Philemon. Nettled by the review, Bentley wrote his own emendations on 323 of these fragments. He restored them metrically, showing that Le Clerc had mixed them with words from the prose texts in which they occur, and had then cut the compound into lengths of twelve syllables, regardless of scansion. Bentley's manuscript, under the name of 'Phileleutherus Lipsiensis,' was transmitted to a scholar at Utrecht, Peter Burmann, who willingly used the permission to publish it. The first edition was sold in three weeks. Le Clerc learned who 'Phileleutherus' was, and wrote a violent letter to

Bentley. Bentley made a caustic reply. He has been charged with denying the authorship. He does not do so: but he shows a mischievous pleasure in puzzling his furious correspondent.

As early as 1702 Bentley had been meditating an edition of Horace. I translate from his Latin preface his own account of the motive.

‘When, a few years ago [*i. e.* in 1700] I was promoted to a station in which official duties and harassing cares, daily surging about me, had distracted me from all deeper studies, I resolved—in order that I might not wholly forget the Muses and my old loves—to set about editing some writer of the pleasanter sort, comparatively light in style and matter, such as would make in me, rather than claim from me, a calm and untroubled mind; a work that could be done bit by bit at odd hours, and would brook a thousand interruptions without serious loss. My choice was HORACE; not because I deemed that I could restore and correct more things in him than in almost any other Latin or Greek author; but because he, above all the ancients—thanks to his merit, or to a peculiar genius and gift for pleasing—was familiar to men’s hands and hearts. The form and scope of my work I defined and limited thus;—that I should touch only those things which concern the soundness and purity of the *text*; but should wholly pass by the mass of those things which relate to history and ancient manners,—that vast domain and laboratory of *comment*.’

Bentley began printing his Horace, with his own emendations embodied in the text and the common readings given at the foot of the page, before he had written the critical notes which were to justify these changes. In August, 1706, he says:—‘I have printed three new

sheets in it this last fortnight, and I hope shall go on to finish by next spring.' Sinister auguries were already heard in certain quarters. 'I do not wonder,' he writes to a friend, 'that some...do talk so wildly about my Horace...I am assured none of them will write against my notes. They have had enough of me, and will hereafter let me alone.' The rumour of Bentley's new labours inspired his old enemy, Dr King, with a satire called 'Horace in Trinity College.' Horace is supposed to have fulfilled his dream of visiting our remote island (*visam Britannos*), but to have lost the airy form in which he proposed to make that excursion,—under the influence of solid cheer supplied to him from the butteries of Trinity College.

Instead of appearing in the spring of 1707, Bentley's Horace was not ready till December 8, 1711. The summer months were the only part of the year in which he could do much; and from his preface it would appear that between 1702 and 1711 there had been four summers in which he made no progress. The notes on the text fill 448 quarto pages of small print, in double column, at the end of the volume. It is characteristic of Bentley that a great part of these notes were written in about five months—July to November, 1711. He says himself that his work was thrown off 'in the first impetus and glow' of his thoughts, and sent to the press almost before the ink was dry. It was rather his way to brag of this; but it must be literally true, to a great extent, of the notes. He had his own reasons for haste, and worked at high pressure. The Horace was to be an offering to Harley, who just then was the umpire of Bentley's fortunes. In the dedication to the Tory Premier, Bentley openly announces himself as a converted Whig, by saying

that Maecenas did not like Horace the less for having borne arms with Brutus and Cassius; not a very happy allusion, when one remembers that the poet ran away at Philippi.

Bentley's Horace is a monumental proof of his ingenuity, learning, and argumentative skill. The notes abound in hints on grammar and metre which have a general value. In reading them one feels, too, the 'impetus and glow' of which their author speaks: one feels almost everywhere the powerful genius of the man. But while the Horace shows Bentley's critical method on a large scale and in a most striking form, it illustrates his defects as conspicuously as his strength. Bentley had first displayed his skill by restoring deeply corrupted passages of Greek writers, especially poets. Heroic remedies were required there. With his wide reading, unrivalled metrical knowledge, and keen insight, Bentley had been able to make some restorations which seemed little of short miraculous. Hopeless nonsense, under his touch, became lucid and coherent. The applause which followed these efforts exalted his confidence in his own gift of divination. His mind was confirmed in a bent which kept him constantly on the look-out for possible improvements of word or phrase in everything that he read.

Now, Horace was one of the most perilous subjects that Bentley could have chosen. Not so much because the text of Horace, as we have it, is particularly pure. There are many places in which corruption is certain, and conjecture is the only resource. But, owing to his peculiar cast of mind and style, Horace is one of the very last authors whose text should be touched without absolute necessity. In the Satires and Epistles his language is coloured by two main influences, subtly



interfused, each of which is very difficult, often impossible, for a modern reader to seize. One is the colloquial idiom of Roman society. The other is literary association, derived from sources, old Italian or Greek, which in many cases are lost. In the Odes, the second of these two influences is naturally predominant; and in them the danger of tampering is more obvious, though perhaps not really greater, than in the Satires or Epistles. Now, Bentley's tendency was to try Horace by the tests of clear syntax, strict logic, and normal usage. He was bent on making Horace 'sound' in a sense less fine, but even more rigorous, than that in which Pope is 'correct.'

Thus, in the 'Art of Poetry,' Horace is speaking of a critic:—'If you told him, *after two or three vain attempts*, that you could not do better, he would bid you erase your work, and put your *ill-turned verses on the anvil again*' (*et male tornatos incudi reddere versus*). 'Ill-turned'—'anvil'! said Bentley: 'what has a lathe to do with an anvil?' And so, for *male tornatos*, he writes *male ter natos*, 'thrice shaped amiss.' Horace elsewhere speaks of verses as *incultis...et male natis*. To Bentley's reading, however, it may be objected that the order of words required by the sense is *ter male natos*: for *male ter natos* ought to mean, either 'unhappily thrice-born'—like the soul of a Pythagorean, unfortunate in two migrations; or 'barely thrice-born'—as if, in some process which required three refinements, the third was scarcely completed. And then, if we are not satisfied with the simplest account of *tornatos*—viz., that Horace lapsed into a mixture of common metaphors—it admits of a strict defence. The verses have been put on the lathe, but have not been successfully rounded and polished. Then, says Horace's critic, they must go back to the

*anvil*, and be forged anew, passing again through that first process by which the rough material is brought into shape for the lathe. Yet Bentley was so sure of his *ter natos* that persons who doubted it seemed no better than 'moles.'

Another instance will illustrate the danger of altering touches in Horace which may have been suggested by some lost literary source. In the Odes (III. iv. 45) Horace speaks of Jupiter as ruling '*cities* and troubled realms, and gods, and *the multitudes of men*' (*urbes... mortalisque turbas*). 'Tell me, pray,' cries Bentley, 'what is the sense of '*cities*' and '*the multitudes of men*'? This is silly—mere tautology.' And so he changes *urbes*, '*cities*,' into *umbras*, '*the shades*' of the departed. Now, as Munro has pointed out, Horace may have had in mind a passage in the *Epicharmus*, a philosophical poem by Ennius, of which a few lines remain: where it is said of Jupiter, '*mortalis atque urbes beluasque omnes iuvat*.' One or two of Bentley's corrections are not only admirable but almost certain (as *musto* Falerno for *misto* in the Satires II. iv. 19). A few more have reason wholly on their side, and yet are not intrinsically probable. Thus in the Epistles (I. vii. 29) we have the fable of the fox, who, when lean, crept through a chink into a granary, and there grew too fat to get out again. 'To the rescue,' exclaims Bentley, 'ye sportsmen, rustics, and naturalists! A fox eating grain!' And so Bentley changes the fox into a field-mouse (*volpecula* into *nitedula*). But the old fabulist from whom Horace got the story, meaning to show how cunning greed may overreach itself, had chosen the animal which is the type of cunning, without thinking of the points on which Bentley dwells, the structure of its teeth and its digestive organs.

Bentley has made altogether between 700 and 800 changes in the text of Horace: in his preface, he recalls 19 of these, but adds a new one (*rectis oculis* for *siccis* in Odes I. iii. 18: which convinced Porson). His paramount guide, he declares, has been his own faculty of divination. To this, he says, he has owed more corrections, and corrections of greater certainty, than to the manuscripts,—in using which, however, where he does use them, he nearly always shows the greatest tact. Now, criticism of a text has only one proper object—to exhibit what the author wrote. It is a different thing to show what he might have written. Bentley's passion for the exercise of his divining faculty hindered him from keeping this simple fact clearly before his mind. In the 'Art of Poetry' (60) Horace has: *Ut silvae foliis pronos mutantur in annos*: 'As woods suffer change of leaves with each declining year.' Nothing could be less open to suspicion,—*foliis* being an ordinary ablative of the part affected (like *capti auribus et oculis* for 'deaf and blind'). Yet Bentley must needs change this good line into one which is bad both in style and in metre:—*Ut silvis folia privos mutantur in annos*, 'as woods have their leaves changed with each year'; and this he prints in his text. Speaking of Bentley's readings in the mass, one may say that Horace would probably have liked two or three of them,—would have allowed a very few more as not much better or worse than his own,—and would have rejected the immense majority with a smile or a shudder.

On the other hand, there is a larger sense in which Bentley's Horace is a model of conservative prudence. Recent German criticism has inclined to the view that Horace's works are interpolated not only with spurious passages but with whole spurious poems. Thus Mr O.

F. Gruppe actually rejects the whole of the beautiful ode, *Tyrrhena regum progenies* (III. xxix.). Another critic, Mr Hofmann-Peerlkamp, regrets that Bentley's haste blinded him to many interpolations. Haupt, Meineke, Ritschl have favoured the same tendency. The prevailing view of English scholarship is that the solitary interpolation in our Horace consists of the eight lines (*Lucili, quam sis mendosus &c.*) prefixed to Satire I. 10, and probably as old, or nearly so, as the poem itself. Bentley's suspicions are confined to a few single lines here and there. But there is only one line in all Horace which he positively condemns. It is mainly a point of literary criticism, and is a curious example of his method. I give it in Latin and English (Odes iv. viii. 15):—

Non celeres fugae  
Reiectaeque retrorsum Hannibalis minae,  
*Non incendia Carthaginis impiae*  
Eius qui domita nomen ab Africa  
Lucratus rediit clarius indicant  
Laudes, quam Calabrae Pierides...

Not the swift flight  
And menace backward hurled of Hannibal,  
*Not impious Carthage sinking into fire*  
So well gives forth his praises, who returned  
With title won from conquered Africa,  
As ye, Calabria's Muses...

Now, says Bentley, the Scipio (Africanus maior) who defeated Hannibal in the Second Punic War is a different person from the Scipio (Africanus minor) who burned Carthage more than half a century later. How can it be said that the defeat of Hannibal glorifies the destroyer of Carthage? And so Bentley would leave out the burning of Carthage, and make the whole passage



refer to the conqueror of Hannibal. The answer seems plain. Horace means: 'The glory of the Scipios never reached a higher pinnacle than that on which it was placed by the Calabrian poet Ennius, when he described the defeat of Hannibal by the elder Africanus; though that achievement was crowned by the younger Africanus, when he finally destroyed Carthage.' The 'praises' of the younger Africanus are not exclusively his personal exploits, but the glories, both ancestral and personal, of his name. Then Bentley objects to the caesura in *Non incendia Carth|aginis impiae*. But what of the undoubtedly genuine verse, *Dum flagrantia de|torquet ad oscula* (Odes II. xii. 25)? 'The preposition *de*,' he replies, 'is, as it were, separated from the verb *torquet*,—not being a native part of that word.' This might seem a bold plea; but it shows his knowledge. In old Latin inscriptions the preposition and the rest of the word are often disjoined,—for instance, IN VICTO could stand for INVICTO: and Bentley's principle would apply to Horace's *Arcanique fides prodiga per|lucidior vitro* (Odes I. xviii. 16). If, however, *Carthaginis* has not the privilege of a compound, it may have that of a proper name. The presence of a proper name has been urged in excuse of *Mentemque lymphat|am Mareotico* (Od. I. xxxvii. 14), *Spectandus in cert|amine Martio* (Od. IV. xiv. 17). Bentley does not notice this ground of defence. Finally, he rejects '*Non incendia Carthaginis impiae*' as a verse of 'manifestly monkish spirit and colour.'

Bentley was the first modern editor who followed the best ancient authorities in calling the Odes *Carmina* and not *Odae*, the Satires *Sermones* and not *Satirae*. In his preface he endeavours to settle the chronological order of



Horace's writings. Previous Horatian critics—as Faber, Dacier, Masson—had aimed at dating separate poems. Bentley maintains—rightly, no doubt—that the poems were originally *published*, as we have them, in whole books. He further assumes—with much less probability—that Horace *composed* in only one style at a time, first writing satires; then iambics (the ‘Epodes’); then the Odes,—of which book iv. and the Carmen Saeculare came between the two books of Epistles. Bentley's method is too rigid. He argues from the internal evidence too much as if a poet's works were the successive numbers of a newspaper. Yet here, too,—though some of his particular views are arbitrary or wrong,—he laid down the main lines of a true scheme.

Bentley's Horace immediately brought out half-a-dozen squibs,—none of them good,—and one or two more serious attacks. John Ker, a schoolmaster, assailed Bentley's Latinity in four Letters (1713); and some years later the same ground was taken by Richard Johnson—who had been a contemporary of Bentley's at Cambridge, and was now master of Nottingham School—in his *Aristarchus Anti-Bentleianus* (1717). The fact is that Bentley wrote Latin as he wrote English,—with racy vigour, and with a wealth of trenchant phrases; but he was not minutely Ciceronian. The two critics were able to pick some holes. One of Bentley's slips was amusing; he promises the readers of his Horace that they will find purity of idiom in his Latin notes,—and calls it *sermonis puritatem*—which happens *not* to be pure Latin. In 1721 a rival Horace was published by Alexander Cunningham, a Scottish scholar of great learning and industry. His emendations are sometimes execrable, but often most ingenious. His

work is marred, however, by a mean spite against Bentley, whom he constantly tries to represent as a plagiarist or a blunderer,—and who ignored him.

The first edition of Bentley's Horace (1711) went off rapidly, and a second was required in 1712. This was published by the eminent firm of Wetstein at Amsterdam. Paper and printing were cheaper there—an important point when the book was to reach all scholars. Thomas Bentley, the nephew, brought out a smaller edition of the work in 1713, dedicating it—with logical propriety—to Harley's *son*. The line in the *Dunciad* (II. 205),—‘Bentley his mouth with classic flatt’ry opes,’—is fixed by Warburton on Thomas Bentley, ‘a small critic, who aped his uncle in a little Horace.’ Among other compliments, Bentley received one or two which he could scarcely have anticipated. Le Clerc, whom he had just been lashing so unmercifully, wrote a review in the *Bibliothèque Choisie* which was at once generous and judicious. Bentley also received a graceful note from Atterbury, now Dean of Christ Church. ‘I am indebted to you, Sir,’ says the Dean, ‘for the great pleasure and instruction I have received from that excellent performance; though at y<sup>e</sup> same time I cannot but own to you the uneasiness I felt when I found how many things in Horace there were, which, after thirty years’ acquaintance with him, I did not understand.’ There is much of Horace in that.

## CHAPTER IX.

### OTHER CLASSICAL STUDIES.—TERENCE.— MANILIUS.—HOMER.

ONE of Bentley's few intimate friends in the second half of his life was Dr Richard Mead, an eminent physician, and in other ways also a remarkable man. After graduating at the University of Padua,—which, as Cambridge men will remember, had been the second *alma mater* of Dr John Caius,—Dr Mead began practice at Stepney in 1696. He rose rapidly to the front rank of his profession, in which he stood from about 1720 to his death in 1754. Dibdin describes him with quaint enthusiasm. 'His house was the general receptacle of men of genius and talent, and of everything beautiful, precious or rare. His curiosities, whether books, or coins, or pictures, were laid open to the public; and the enterprising student and experienced antiquary alike found amusement and a courteous reception. He was known to all foreigners of intellectual distinction, and corresponded both with the artisan and the potentate.'

In 1721—Bentley being in London at the time—Mead gave him a copy of a Greek inscription just published by the accomplished antiquary, Edmund Chishull, who had been chaplain to the English Factory

at Smyrna. A marble slab, about 8 feet 7 inches high and 18 inches broad, had been found in the Troad. It is now in the British Museum. This slab had supported the bust of a person who had presented some pieces of plate to the citizens of Sigeum; on the upper part, an inscription in Ionic Greek records the gifts; lower down, nearly the same words are repeated in Attic Greek, with the addition,—‘Aesopus and his brothers made me.’ Bentley dashed off a letter to Mead; there had been no bust at all, he said; the two inscriptions on the slab were merely copied from two of the pieces of plate; the artists named were the silversmiths. He was mistaken. The true solution is clearly that which has since been given by Kirchhoff. The Ionic inscription was first carved by order of the donor, a native of the Ionic Proconnesus: the lower inscription was added at Sigeum, where settlers had introduced the Attic dialect, on its being found that the upper inscription could not easily be read from beneath: Aesopus and his brothers were the stone-cutters. Yet Bentley’s letter incidentally throws a flash of light on a point not belonging to its main subject. A colossal statue of Apollo had been dedicated in Delos by the islanders of Naxos. On the base are these words:—ΟΦΥΤΟΔΙΘΟΕΜΙΑΝΔΡΙΑΣΚΑΙΤΟΣΦΕΑΑΣ. Bentley read this (τ)οΦυτοῦ [= ταύτοῦ] λίθον εἶμ’, ἀνδριάς καὶ τὸ σφέλας, an iambic trimeter (with hiatus): ‘I am of the same stone, statue and pedestal.’

After this instance of rashness, it is right to record a striking success. In 1728 Chishull published an inscription from copies made by the travellers Spon and Wheeler. Bentley, in a private letter, suggested some corrections; but Chishull, who saw the criticisms without knowing the author, demurred to some of them,

thinking that the copies could not have been so inexact. Some years later the stone itself was brought to England. It then appeared that the copies had been wrong, and that Bentley's conjectural reading agreed in every particular with the marble itself. That marble is in the British Museum: it was found at the ancient Chalcedon on the Bosphorus, opposite Constantinople, and had supported a statue of *Zeus Ourios*, i.e. 'Zeus the giver of fair winds.' He had a famous temple in that neighbourhood, at the mouth of the Black Sea, where voyagers through the straits were wont to make their vows. The inscription (3797 in the *Corpus*) consists of four elegiac couplets, of which the style would justify us in supposing that they were at least as old as the age of Alexander: I translate them:—

ZEUS, the sure guide who sends the favouring gale,  
Claims a last vow before ye spread the sail :  
If to the Azure Rocks your course ye urge,  
Where in the strait Poseidon lifts the surge,  
Or through the broad Ægean seek your home,  
Here lay your gift—and speed across the foam.  
Behold the god, whose wafting breath divine  
All mortals welcome : Philon raised the sign.

It was shortly before his death in 1742 that this proof of his acuteness was given to the world (by John Taylor), along with another. A Persian manuscript bore the date '*Yonane* (Ionian) 1504': Bentley showed that this was reckoned from the foundation of the dynasty of Seleucidae—'Ionian' being the general oriental name for 'Hellene'—and meant the year 1193 of our era.

In 1724 an edition of Terence was published by Dr Francis Hare. Bentley had long meditated such a work. He was never a jealous man. But he had a good deal of



the feeling expressed by the verse, 'Shame to be mute and let barbarians speak.' He put forth all his powers. At the beginning of 1726—that is, some eighteen months after the appearance of Hare's Terence—Bentley's came out. And it was not Terence only. Hare had promised the Fables of Phaedrus, and Bentley forestalled him by giving these in the same volume; also the 'Sentences' (273 lines) of the so-called Publius Syrus.

The Terence is one of Bentley's titles to fame. Any attempt to criticise such an author's text demands a knowledge of his metres. Bentley was the first modern who threw any clear light on the metrical system of the Latin dramatists. Here, as in other cases, it is essential to remember the point at which he took up the work. Little or nothing of scientific value had been done before him. The prevalent view had been based on that of Priscian, who recognised in Terence only two metres, the iambic and the trochaic,—the metre of which the basis is  $\cup -$ , and that of which it is  $- \cup$ . Every verse was to be forced into one or other of these moulds, by assuming all manner of 'licences' on the part of the poet. Nay, Priscian says that in his time some persons denied that there were any metres in Terence at all! (*quosdam vel abnegare esse in Terentii comoediis metra*). In the preface to an edition of Terence which appeared almost simultaneously with Bentley's, the Dutch editor, Westerhof, alludes ironically to a hint in Bentley's Horace (Sat. II. v. 79) that it was possible to restore the Terentian metres; a sneer which it was Westerhof's fate to expiate by compiling the index for Bentley's second edition when it was published at Amsterdam in 1727. The scholars of the sixteenth cen-

tury who had treated the subject—Glareanus, Erasmus, Faernus—had followed the ‘licence’ theory. Bentley’s object was to reclaim as much as possible from this supposed realm of ‘licence,’ and enlarge the domain of law. He points out, first, the variety of Terence’s metres, and illustrates each by an English verse. He then defines certain metrical differences between Roman Comedy, as in Terence, and Roman epic poetry, as in Virgil. The characteristic of Bentley’s views on Terentian metre consisted in taking account of accent (‘prosody’ in the proper sense), and not solely of quantity. To judge from some of Bentley’s emendations in poetry, his ear for sound was not very fine; but his ear for rhythm was exact. Guided by this, he could see that the influence of accent in Roman Comedy sometimes overruled the epic and lyric canons of quantitative metre. In one case, however, his attention to accent led him into an erroneous refinement. In Latin, he says, no word of two or more syllables is accented on the last syllable: thus it is *vīrum*, not *virúm*. Comic poets, he urges, writing for popular audiences, had to guard as much as possible against laying a metrical stress on these final syllables which could not support an accent. In the iambic trimeter they could not observe this rule everywhere. But Terence, said Bentley, always observes it in the third foot. As an example, I may take this verse:—

Ultro ád | me ven|it ún|icam || gnatám | suam :

where the rule, though broken in the 5th foot, is kept in the 3rd. But Bentley seems not to have noticed that this is a result of metre, not of accent: it is due to the caesura.

Bentley corrected the text of Terence in about a thousand places (‘mille, opinor, locis,’ he says),—chiefly

on metrical grounds. Yet in every scene of every play, according to Ritschl, he left serious blemishes. That only shows what was the state of the field in which Bentley broke new ground. His work must not be judged as if he propounded a complete metrical doctrine. Rather he threw out a series of original remarks, right in some points, wrong in others, pregnant in all. G. Hermann and Ritschl necessarily speak of Bentley's labours on Terence with mingled praise and censure; both, however, do full justice to the true instinct with which he led the attack on the problem. Modern studies in Latin metre and pronunciation have advanced the questions treated by Bentley to a new stage; but his merit remains. He was the pioneer of metrical knowledge in its application to the Latin drama.

A word of mention is due to the very curious Latin speech which Bentley has printed in his Terence after the sketch of the metres. It was delivered by him on July 6, 1725, when, as Regius Professor of Divinity, he had occasion to present seven incepting doctors in that faculty. He interprets the old symbols of the doctoral degree,—the cap,—the book,—the gold ring,—the chair ('believe those who have tried it—no bench is so hard');—and congratulates the University on the beneficence of George I. It has been wondered why Bentley inserted this speech in his Terence. Surely the reason is evident. He had recently been restored to those degrees which had been taken from him by the Cambridge Senate in 1718. He seizes this opportunity of intimating to the world that he is once more in full exercise of his functions as Regius Professor of Divinity.

It was in his seventy-seventh year (1739) that Bentley fulfilled a project of his youth by publishing an

edition of Manilius. At the age of twenty-nine (1691) he had been actively collecting materials, and had even made some progress with the text. In 1727 we find that this work, so long laid aside, stood first on the list of promises to be redeemed: and in 1736 it was ready for press. A proposal for publishing it was made to Bentley by a London 'Society for the Encouragement of Learning,' which aimed at protecting authors from booksellers. Bentley declined. The Manilius was printed in 1739 by Henry Woodfall. It is a beautiful quarto; the frontispiece is Vertue's engraving of Thornhill's portrait of Bentley, *ætat.* 48 (1710); a good engraving, though a conventional benignity tames and spoils that peculiar expression which is so striking in the picture at Trinity College.

Manilius is the author of an epic poem in five books, called *Astronomica*: but popular astronomy is subordinate, in his treatment, to astrology. Strangely enough, the poet's age was so open a question with the scholars of the seventeenth century that Gevārts actually identified him with Theodorus Mallius, consul in 399 A.D., whom Claudian panegyrises. The preface to Bentley's edition, written by his nephew Richard, rightly assigns Manilius to the age of Augustus, though without giving the internal proofs. These are plain. Book I. was finished after the defeat of Varus (A.D. 9), and Book IV. before the death of Augustus (A.D. 14). F. Jacob, in his edition of the poet (rec. Berlin 1846), understands a verse in Book V. (512) as referring to the restoration by Tiberius of Pompey's Theatre, after it had been burnt down in 22 A.D. But, according to the marble of Ancyra, Augustus also had repaired that theatre at a great cost, and took credit for allowing the name of Pompey to remain in the



dedicatory inscription, instead of replacing it by his own. Clearly it is to this that the words of Manilius allude,—*Hinc Pompeia manent veteris monimenta triumphi*,—implying a compliment not only to the munificence, but to the magnanimity, of Augustus. There is no reason, then, for doubting that the whole poem was composed, or took its present shape, between A.D. 9 and A.D. 14. The poet gives no clue to his own origin, but his style has a strongly Greek tinge.

Scaliger pronounced him 'equal in sweetness to Ovid, and superior in majesty;' a verdict which Bentley cites with approval. To most readers it will be scarcely intelligible. Where Manilius deals with the technical parts of astronomy, he displays, indeed, excellent ingenuity; but, in the frequent passages where he imitates Lucretius, the contrast between a poet and a rhetorician is made only more glaring by an archaic diction. The episode of Andromeda and Perseus, in his fifth book, and a passage on human reason in the second, were once greatly admired. To show him at his best, however, I should rather take one of those places where he expresses more simply a feeling of wonder and awe common to every age. '*Wherefore see we the stars arise in their seasons, and move, as at a word spoken, on the paths appointed for them? Of whom there is none that hastens, neither is there any that tarries behind. Why are the summer nights beautiful with these that change not, and the nights of winter from of old? These things are not the work of chance, but the order of a God most high.*'

Bentley's treatment of the text sometimes exhibits all his brilliancy: thus in Book v. 737 the received text had—



Sic etiam magno quaedam respondere mundo  
*Haec* Natura facit, quae *caeli* condidit orbem.

This *respondere* had even been quoted to show that the poem was post-classical. The MSS. have not *Haec*, but *QUAM*: not *caeli* but *CAELO*: and one good MS. has *MUNDO EST*. Bentley restores:—

Sic etiam in magno quaedam *RESPUBLICA* mundo est,  
 Quam Natura facit, quae caelo condidit *URBEM*.

‘So also in the great firmament there is a commonwealth, wrought by Nature, who hath ordered a city in the heavens.’ *Respondere* arose from a contraction *resp.* And *urbem* is made certain by the next verses, which elaborate the comparison of the starry hierarchy to the various ranks of civic life. But this, Bentley’s last published work, shows a tendency from which his earlier criticism was comparatively free. Not content with amending, he rejects very many verses as spurious. The total number is no less than 170 out of 4220 lines which the poem contains. In the vast majority of cases, the ground of rejection is wholly and obviously inadequate. As an example of his rashness here, we may take one passage,—which, I venture to think, he has not understood. At the beginning of Book iv. Manilius is reciting the glories of Rome.

Quid referam Cannas admotaque moenibus arma?  
 Varronemque fuga magnum (quod vivere possit  
 Postque tuos, Thrasimene, lacus) Fabiumque morando?  
*Accepisse iugum victas Carthaginis arces?*

‘Why should I tell of Cannae, and of (Carthaginian) arms carried to the walls of Rome? Why tell of Varro, great in his flight, ... and Fabius, in his delay? Or how the conquered towers of Carthage received our yoke?’

Varro’s ‘flight’ is his escape from the field of Cannae,

after which he saved the remnant of the Roman army. The words, *quod vivere possit Postque tuos, Thrasimene, lacus*, are untranslatable. Bentley seems to have understood:—‘in that he can live, and that, too, after the battle at Lake Thrasimene:’ but, to say no more, *que* forbids this. And then he rejects the whole line, *Accepisse—arces*. Why? Because ‘yokes’ are put on peoples, not on ‘towers’! Now the oldest manuscript (Gemblacensis) has not *vivere*, but *VINCERE*: the MSS. have not *quod* (a conjecture), but *QUAM*. They have also *MORANTEM* (not *morando*), *VICTAE* (not *victas*). I should read:—

Quid referam Cannas admotaque moenibus arma?

Varronemque fuga magnum, Fabiumque morantem?

Postque tuos, Thrasimene, lacus QUOM VINCERE POSSET,

Accepisse iugum victae Carthagini arces?

‘and that,—though after the fight by thy waters, Thrasimene, she could hope to conquer,—the towers of conquered Carthage received our yoke.’

The words ‘*quom vincere posset*’ allude to the imminent peril of Rome after Hannibal’s great victory at Lake Thrasimene, when the fall of the city seemed inevitable if the conqueror should march upon it. (Cp. Liv. xxii. 7 f.)

It remains to speak of another labour which Bentley was not destined to complete, but which, even in its comparatively slight relics, offers points of great interest—his Homer.

The first trace of Homeric criticism by Bentley occurs in a letter which he wrote to his friend Davies, of Queens’ College, just after Joshua Barnes had published his edition of the Iliad and Odyssey (1711). Barnes, who was unreasonably offended with Bentley, refers in

his preface to a certain 'hostile person,' a very Zoilus. 'If he mean me,' says Bentley, 'I have but dipped yet into his notes, and yet I find everywhere just occasion of censure.' Bentley then shows that Barnes had made an arbitrary change in a line of the *Iliad* (ἀντάρ for ἀλλά in xiv. 101), through not seeing that a reading which had stood in all former editions, and which had puzzled the Greek commentator Eustathius, was a mere blunder (ἀποπτανέουσιν for ἀποπαπτανέουσιν). In 1713 Bentley published his 'Remarks' on the 'Discourse of Free-Thinking' by Anthony Collins. Collins had spoken of the *Iliad* as 'the epitome of all arts and sciences,' adding that Homer 'designed his poem for eternity, to please and instruct mankind.' 'Take my word for it,' says Bentley, 'poor Homer, in those circumstances and early times, had never such aspiring thoughts. He wrote a sequel of songs and rhapsodies, to be sung by himself for small earnings and good cheer, at festivals and other days of merriment; the *Ilias* he made for the men, and the *Odysseis* for the other sex. These loose songs were not collected together in the form of an epic poem till Pisistratus's time, above [2nd edition: 1st, *about*] 500 years after.' There is some ambiguity in the phrase, 'a *sequel* of songs and rhapsodies.' It seems improbable that Bentley meant, 'a *connected* series.'

When Bentley wrote this, the origin of the Homeric poems had not yet become a subject of modern controversy. It would be unfair to press his casual utterance as if it were a carefully defined statement. Yet it is interesting to note the general outlines of the belief which satisfied a mind so bold and so acute. He supposes, then, that a poet named Homer lived about 1050 B. C. This poet 'wrote' (by which, perhaps, he

meant no more than 'composed') both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. But neither of them was given to the world by Homer as a single epic. Each consisted of many short lays, which Homer recited separately. These lays circulated merely as detached pieces, until they were collected about 550 B. C. into the two epics which we possess.

Seventy-two years later F. A. Wolf published his *Prolegomena*. The early epic poetry of Greece, Wolf argues, was transmitted by oral recitation, not by writing. But *our* *Iliad* and *Odyssey* could not have been composed without writing. We must conclude, then, that the Homeric poems were originally, in Bentley's phrase, 'a sequel of songs and rhapsodies.' These 'loose songs' were first written down and arranged by the care of Peisistratus. Thus Bentley's sentence contains the germ of the view which Wolf developed. Yet it would be an error to conceive Bentley here as an original sceptic, who threw out the first pregnant hint of a new theory. Bentley's relation to the modern Homeric question is of a different kind. The view which he expresses was directly derived by him from notices in ancient writers; as when Pausanias says that the Homeric poems, before their collection by Peisistratus, had been 'scattered, and preserved only by memory, some here, some there.' Cicero, Plutarch, Diogenes Laertius, the Platonic *Hipparchus*, Heracleides Ponticus, were other witnesses to whom Bentley could appeal.

He brought forward and approved that old tradition at a time when the original unity of each epic was the received belief. It was not till the latter part of the eighteenth century that the passion for returning from

‘art’ to ‘nature’ prepared a welcome for the doctrine that the Iliad and the Odyssey are parcels of primitive folk-songs. But then we note the off-hand way in which Bentley’s statement assumes points which have since vexed Homeric research. He assumes that the Iliad and Odyssey are made up of parts which were *originally* intended for detached recitations: an inference to which the structure of the poems is strongly adverse. He accepts without reserve the tradition regarding Peisistratus. By the ancient saying that the Iliad was written for men and the Odyssey for women, Bentley probably understood no more than that the Iliad deals with war, and the Odyssey with the trials of a true wife. There is, indeed, a further sense in which we might say that the Iliad, with its historical spirit, was masculine, and the Odyssey, with its fairy-land wonders and its tender pathos, more akin to *das Ewigweibliche*: but we cannot read that meaning into Bentley’s words. He seems to have found no such difference between the characters of the two epics as constrained him to become a ‘separator.’ He had not felt, what is now so generally admitted, that the Odyssey bears the marks of a later time than the Iliad. Briefly, then, we cannot properly regard Bentley as a forerunner of the Homeric controversy on its literary or historical side, preeminently as his critical gifts would have fitted him to take up the question. He knew the ancient sources on which Wolf afterwards worked, but he had not given his mind to sifting them. Bentley’s connection with Homeric criticism is wholly on the side of the text, and chiefly in regard to metre.

In 1726 Bentley was meditating an edition of Homer, but intended first to finish his labours on the New Testament. In 1732 he definitely committed him-



self to the Homeric task. At that time the House of Lords had before it the question whether the Bishop of Ely could try Bentley. As the Horace had been dedicated to Harley, so the Homer was to be dedicated to Lord Carteret, a peer who was favourable to the Master of Trinity's cause, and who encouraged the design by granting or procuring the loan of manuscripts. In 1734 we find Bentley at work on Homer. But, though he made some progress, nothing was published. Trinity College possesses the only relics of his Homeric work.

First, there is a copy of H. Estienne's folio *Poetae Graeci*. In this Bentley had read through the Iliad, Odyssey, and Homeric Hymns, writing very brief notes in the margin, which are either his own corrections, or readings from manuscripts or grammarians. In the Hymns the notes become rarer; and it is evident that all were written rapidly. This is the book which Trinity College sent in 1790 to Göttingen, for the use of Heyne, who warmly acknowledges the benefit in the preface to his edition of the Iliad. Secondly, a small quarto manuscript book contains somewhat fuller notes by Bentley on the first six books of the Iliad. These notes occupy 43 pages of the book, ceasing abruptly at verse 54 of Iliad VII. Lastly, there is the manuscript draft of Bentley's notes on the digamma, the substance of which has been published by J. W. Donaldson in his *New Cratylus*.

The distinctive feature of Bentley's Homeric work is the restoration of the digamma. Bentley's discovery was too much in advance of his age to be generally received otherwise than with ridicule or disbelief. Even F. A. Wolf, who yielded to few in his admiration of the English critic, could speak of the digamma as merely an illusion which,

in old age, mocked the genius of Bentley (*senile ludibrium ingenii Bentleiani*). At the present day, when the philological fact has so long been seen in a clearer light, it is easy to underrate the originality and the insight which the first perception of it showed.

In reading Homer, Bentley had been struck by such things as these. The words, '*and Atreides the king*,' are in Homer, *Atreides teanax*. Now the *e* in *te* would naturally be cut off before the first *a* in *anax*, making *t'anax*. But the poet cannot have meant to cut it off, since that would spoil the metre. Why, then, was he able to avoid cutting it off? Because, said Bentley, in Homer's time the word *anax* did not begin with a vowel: it was *vanax*. Many old writers mention a letter which had disappeared from the ordinary Greek alphabet. Its sound had been like the Latin *v*,—that is, probably, like our *w*. Its form was like *Ϝ*: which, to Greek eyes, suggested their letter gamma, *γ*, with another gamma on its shoulders: and so they called this *Ϝ* the 'double gamma,' the *digamma*. Several words are specified by the old grammarians as having once begun with this digamma. Bentley tried the experiment of replacing it before such words where they occurred in Homer. Very often, he found, this explained a gap (or 'hiatus'), like that in *Atreides teanax*. He came to the conclusion that, when the Homeric poems were composed, this letter was still used, and that it should *always* be prefixed, in Homer, to those words which once had it.

The first hint of this idea occurs in Bentley's copy (now at Trinity College) of the 'Discourse of Free-Thinking' by Anthony Collins, which Bentley was reading and annotating in 1713. On a blank leaf at the end he has written:—

Homer's δίγαμμα Aeolicum to be added. οἶνος, *Foivos*, vinũ : a Demonstration of this, because *Foivos* has always preceding it a vowel : so οἶνονοράζων.

Bentley's view was noticed by his friend Dr Samuel Clarke, in the second volume of his *Iliad*, published posthumously in 1732. In the same year came forth Bentley's edition of *Paradise Lost*, in which he had occasion to quote Homer. There the digamma makes its modern *début* in all the majesty of a capital F,—for which printers now use the sign *F*. It was the odd look of such a word as *Féros* that inspired Pope with the lines in the *Dunciad*: Bentley speaks:—

Roman and Greek grammarians ! know your better,  
Author of something yet more great than letter ;  
While tow'ring o'er your alphabet, like Saul,  
Stands our digamma, and o'ertops them all.

Bentley had thrown a true and brilliant light on the text of Homer. But, as was natural then, he pushed his conclusion too far. The Greek *Foivos* is the same as *vinum* and *wine*. Homer, Bentley thought, could no more have said *oinos*, instead of *voinos*, than Romans could say *inum*, or Englishmen *ine*. Accordingly, he set to work to restore this letter all through the Homeric poems. Often it mended the metre, but not seldom it marred it ; and then Bentley was for changing the text. A single instance will give some idea of his task. In *Iliad* 1. 202 we have the words *hūbrîn idē* (ὕβριν ἰδῆ), (that thou mayest) 'see the insolence.' This word *ide* was originally *vide* : its stem *vid* is that of the Latin *video* and our *wit*. Homer, said Bentley, could have written nothing but *vide*. And so, to make the metre right, he reads a different word (ὀφῆς). Now let us see what this involves. This stem *vid* is the parent of several words, very frequent

in Homer, for *seeing*, *seeming*, *knowing*, *form*, etc. On Bentley's view, every one of these must always, in Homer, begin with *F*. The number of changes required can easily be estimated by anyone who will consult Predergast's Concordance to the Iliad, Dunbar's to the Odyssey and Homeric Hymns. I do not guarantee the absolute precision of the following numbers, but they are at least approximately correct. I find that about 832 derivatives of the stem *vid* occur in the Iliad, Odyssey, and Hymns. By *F* I denote those cases in which the metre *requires* the digamma: by *N*, those in which the metre *excludes* it: by *Q*, those cases which prove nothing:—

	Total.	<i>F</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Q</i>
Iliad.....	357	205	81	71
Odyssey ...	376	220	76	80
Hymns ....	99	38	34	27
	832	463	191	178

So, for this one root *vid*, Bentley would have been compelled to amend the text of Homer in about 191 places. The number of digammated roots in Homer is between 30 and 40; no other is so prolific as *vid*; but a consistent restoration of the digamma would require change in at least several hundreds of places; and often under conditions which require that the changes, if any, should be extremely bold. Bentley's error consisted in regarding the digamma as a constant element, like any other letter in the radical parts of the words to which it had once been prefixed. It was not this, but rather the ghost of a vanished letter, which, in Homeric metre,

fitfully haunts its ancient seats. Nor is it the only such ghost. When Bentley found that, in Homer, the word  $\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ , 'as,' can be treated as if it began with a consonant, he wrote  $\text{F}\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ : but the lost initial was not the spirant  $\nu$ : it was  $\gamma$ : for  $\acute{\omega}\varsigma$  is merely the ablative of  $\delta$ -s, the Sanskrit *yāt*.

Apart from the restoration of the digamma, the relics of Bentley's work on Homer present other attempts at emendation. These are always acute and ingenious; but the instances are rare indeed in which they would now commend themselves to students. I give a few specimens below, in order that scholars may judge of their general character\*. The boldness with which Bentley was disposed

\* I. From Bentley's MS. notes in the margin of the Homer.

Odyssey i. 23 ( $\text{Ἄλλ' ὁ μὲν Αἰθίοπας μετεκίαθε τηλόθ' ἔοντας, | Αἰθίοπας, τοὶ διχθὰ δεδαίταται, ἔσχατοι ἀνδρῶν}$ ). 'legendum *Αἰθίοπες*: si vera lectio Π. Ζ. 396.' ( $\text{θυγάτηρ μεγαλήτορος Ἡελίωνος, | Ἡελίων, ὃς ἔναιεν, κ.τ.λ.}$ ) [Lucian speaks of 'Attic solecisms,'—deliberate imitations, by late writers, of the irregular grammar found in Attic writers: surely this is a gratuitous 'Homeric solecism.'] 29. ( $\text{μνήσατο γὰρ κατὰ θυμὸν ἀμύμονος Αἰγίσθοιο}$ .) Bentley conjectures  $\text{κατὰ νοῦν ἀνοήμονος}$ . 51.  $\text{θεὰ δ' ἐν δώμασι ναλεῖ}$  'Eust. not. ἐν δώματα ναλεῖ pro vulg. δώμασι, sed lego  $\text{θεὰ δ' ἐν πότνια ναλεῖ}$ . ἐνναλεῖ absolute, ut ἐνναλουσι Π. i. 154, 296. Sic Od. E. 215  $\text{εὐαμπελλὲς Πότνια θεὰ. κοῦ δώματα ἔναιεν}$  sed  $\text{σπέος}$ . Ibidem.' [*i.e.* Bentley objects to the word  $\text{δώματα}$  because Calypso lived in a cave. But ἐν δώματα ναλεῖ is unquestionably right.]

II. From his MS. book of notes on Iliad i—vii. 54.

Iliad iii. 46  $\text{ἦ τοιόσδε ἑών}$ . Amabant, credo, Hiatus; non solum tolerabant. Dedit poeta  $\text{ἦ τοιοῦτος ἑών}$ . 212 ( $\text{μύθοις καὶ μήδεα πᾶσιν ὕφαινον}$ .) Casaubonus ad Theocritum c. ix. corrigat  $\text{ἔφαινον}$ . Recte.  $\text{ἔφαινον μύθοις}$ , in concione loquebantur. Sic Π. σ. 295,  $\text{Νήπιε, μηκέτι ταῦτα νοήματα φαῖν' ἐνὶ δήμῳ}$ . 357. ( $\text{διὰ μὲν ἀσπίδος ἦλθε φαεινῆς ὄβριμον ἔγχος}$ .) Saepe redit hic versiculus qui si vere ab Homero est, Licentia nescio qua pronuntiabitur  $\text{Δία μὲν}$ , ut "Apes, "Apes. Non enim tribrachys pro Dactylo hic ponitur



to correct Homer may be illustrated by a single example. Priam, the aged king of Troy, is standing beside Helen on the walls, and looking forth on the plain where warriors are moving. He sees Odysseus passing along the ranks of his followers, and asks Helen who that is. 'His arms lie on the earth that feedeth many: but he himself, *like a leader of the flock* (κτίλος ὤς), moves along the ranks of men; yea, I liken him to a young ram with thick fleece, that passeth through a great flock of white sheep.' Bentley, thinking that ὤς must be *Φῶς*, had to get rid of κτίλος somehow. 'Never yet,' says Bentley, 'have I seen a ram ordering the ranks of men. And what tautology! He moves along, like a ram: and I compare him to a ram!' And so he changes the ram into a word meaning 'unarmed' (writing αὐτὰρ ψιλὸς ἐὼν instead of αὐτὸς δὲ κτίλος ὤς), because the arms of Odysseus are said to be lying on the ground.

Bentley had done first-rate work on some authors who would have rewarded him better than Homer,—better than Horace or Manilius. It was his habit to enter collations of manuscripts, or his own conjectures, in the margins of his classical books. Some of these books are at Cambridge. Many more are in the British Museum. The *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1807 relates how Kidd found 60 volumes, formerly Bentley's, at the London bookseller Lackington's, to whom they had been sold by Cumberland, and from whom they were at once bought for the Museum by the Trustees. The complete list of the Bentley books in the British Museum

ad exprimendam Hastae celeritatem, non magis quam Molossus pes trium longarum ad tarditatem exprimendam. Quid si legat quis, Διαπρὸ μὲν, pede Proceleusmatico, ut 'capitibu' nutantes pinus,' 'Parietibus textum caecis iter.'

comprises (omitting duplicates) 70 works. All, or nearly all, the manuscript notes which enrich these volumes have now been printed somewhere. The notes on Lucan, whom Bentley had intended to edit, were published by Cumberland in 1760. Among the most ingenious emendations are those on Nicander, the Greek physician of Colophon (circ. 150 B.C.), whose epic on venomous bites (*Theriaca*) Bentley had annotated at the request of Dr Mead. But the province of Greek and Roman literature in which these remains most strikingly illustrate Bentley's power is, on the whole, that of the comic drama.

He had sent Küster his remarks on two plays of Aristophanes,—the *Plutus* and *Clouds*. All the eleven comedies have his marginal notes in his copy of Froben's edition, now in the British Museum. These notes were first published by G. Burges in the *Classical Journal* XI.—XIV. For exact scholarship, knowledge, and brilliant felicity, they are wonderfully in advance of anything which had then been done for the poet. Porson is said to have felt the joy of a truly great scholar on finding that his own emendations of Aristophanes had been anticipated, in some seventy instances, by the predecessor whom he so highly revered. Bentley's emendations of Plautus are also very remarkable. They have been published, for the first time, by Mr E. A. Sonnenschein, in his edition of the *Captivi* (1880), from the Plautus in the British Museum which Bentley used; it is the second edition of Pareus (Frankfurt, 1623). All our twenty comedies have been touched more or less,—the number of Bentley's conjectures in each ranging from perhaps 20 to 150 or more.

As in Aristophanes, so in Plautus, Bentley sometimes

anticipated the best thoughts of later critics. Such coincidences show how much he was in advance of his age. Those conjectures of Bentley's which were afterwards made independently by such men as Porson or Ritschl were in most cases *certain*; in Bentley's day, however, they were as yet beyond the reach of everyone else. Nor must we overlook his work on Lucretius. That library of Isaac Voss which Bentley had vainly sought to secure for Oxford carried with it to Leyden the two most important MSS. of Lucretius,—one of the 9th century (Munro's A), another of the 10th (B). Bentley had to work without these. His notes,—first completely published in the Glasgow edition of Wakefield (1813),—fill only 22 octavo pages in the Oxford edition of 1818. But their quality has been recognised by the highest authority. Munro thinks that Bentley, if he had had the Leyden MSS., 'might have anticipated what Lachmann did by a century and a half.' Another labour also, in another field, descended from Bentley to Lachmann: of that we must now speak.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE PROPOSED EDITION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

DR JOHN MILL published in 1707 his edition of the Greek Testament, giving in foot-notes the various readings which he had collected by the labour of thirty years. To understand the impression which this work produced, it is necessary to recall the nature of its predecessors. The Greek text of the New Testament, as then generally read, was ultimately based on two sixteenth century editions ; that of Erasmus (Basel, 1516), which had been marked by much carelessness ; and that due chiefly to Stunica, in the ' Complutensian ' Polyglott (so called from *Complūtum*, or Alcalá de Henares) of Cardinal Ximenes, printed in 1514, and probably published in 1522. The folio edition printed by Robert Estienne at Paris in 1550 was founded on the text of Erasmus. The Elzevir editions, of which the first appeared in 1624, gave the text of Estienne as imperfectly revised by the reformer Beza. The second Elzevir edition (1633) declared this to be ' the text now received by all.' Hence it came to be known as the ' Received Text.'

The existence of various readings, though a well-known, was hardly a prominent fact. Some had been

given in the margin of the folio Estienne; Beza had referred to others; more had been noticed by Walton in the Greek Testament of his Polyglott (1657), and by Bishop Fell in his small edition (1675). The sources of textual evidence generally had been described and discussed with intelligence and candour by the French scholar Simon (1689—95). But Mill's edition was the first which impressed the public mind by marshalling a great array of variants, roughly estimated at thirty thousand. In his learned *Prolegomena* Mill often expressed opinions and preferences, but without supplying any general clue to the labyrinth exhibited in his critical notes.

The alarm felt in some quarters is strikingly shown by Whitby's censure of Mill's edition (1710), in which he goes so far as to affirm that the 'Received Text' can be defended *in all places* where the sense is affected (*in iis omnibus locis* lectionem textus defendi posse), and that even in matters 'of lesser moment' it is 'most rarely' invalidated. On the other hand, anti-Christian writers did not fail to make capital of a circumstance which they represented as impugning the tradition. Thus Anthony Collins, in his 'Discourse of Free-Thinking,' specially dwelt on Mill's 30,000 variants. In his published reply to Collins (1713), Bentley pointed out that such variants are perfectly compatible with the absence of any essential corruption, while he insisted on the value of critical studies in their application to the Scriptures. Dr Hare, in publicly thanking Bentley for this reply, urged him to undertake an edition of the New Testament. Undoubtedly there was a wide-spread feeling that some systematic effort should be made towards disengaging a standard text from the variations set forth by Mill.



Three years later (1716), Bentley received a visit from John James Wetstein, a Swiss, related to the Amsterdam publishers who had reprinted Bentley's Horace. Wetstein was then on leave of absence from his duties as a chaplain in the Dutch army. For years he had devoted himself with rare ardour to those critical studies of the New Testament which were afterwards embodied in his edition (1751—2). He had recently collated some Greek MSS. in the Library of Paris. 'On hearing this'—Wetstein writes—Bentley 'urged me to publish my collations, with his aid. I pleaded my youth, and the shortness of my leave of absence; I asked him to undertake the work himself, and to use my collections. At length I moved the great critic to entertain a design of which he seemed to have had no thought before—that of editing the New Testament.'

It is assumed by Tregelles that Wetstein was mistaken in supposing that Bentley had not previously contemplated an edition. Bentley's *studies* on the New Testament dated, it is true, from his earliest manhood; there are traces of them in his Letter to Mill (1691), no less than in his reply to Collins; he had already collated the Alexandrine MS., and had been using the 'Codex Bezae' (his 'Cantabrigiensis,' belonging to the University Library) since 1715. But it does not follow that Wetstein's statement is not accurate. The fact that Bentley was deeply studying a subject is never sufficient to prove that he meant to write upon it.

Now, at any rate, the plan was definitely formed, and Wetstein returned to Paris, in order to aid it by further collations. In April, 1716, Bentley announced his project in a remarkable letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Wake. Monk hints, though he does not say,

that Bentley's object was 'to interest the public,' in view of imminent law proceedings. I quite agree with Mr A. A. Ellis, the editor of *Bentleii Critica Sacra*, that in this case there is no real ground for such a suggestion. Bentley's enthusiasm for the work was sincere, as his correspondence with Wetstein abundantly shows; he did not bring his scheme before the public till 1720; and his object in addressing the Primate was no other than that which he states, viz., to learn whether the project was likely to be encouraged. After sketching his plan, he observes to Dr Wake that it might be made for ever impossible by a fire in the Royal Library of Paris or London. It is startling to read this foreboding, expressed in 1716. Fifteen years later, a fire actually broke out at night in the King's Library, then lodged at Abingdon House, Westminster,—when the Cottonian Genesis was seriously damaged. An eyewitness of the scene has described Bentley hurrying out of the burning Library, in his night-gown and his great wig, with the most precious of his charges, the Alexandrine manuscript of the Greek Bible, under his arm.

The Archbishop's reply to Bentley is not extant, but appears to have been favourable. For the next four years (1716—20) Bentley continued to gather materials. Wetstein was not his only ally. David Casley, the Deputy King's Librarian, worked for him in the libraries of Oxford. More important still was the aid of John Walker, a Fellow of Trinity College, who went to Paris in 1719, and passed nearly a year there in collating manuscripts. Walker was most kindly received by the Benedictines of St Maur, with whom Bentley had already been placed in communication by Wetstein. They provided him with a room in their monastery at St Germain

des Prés, procured collations from the Benedictines of Angers, and personally aided his work in their own library.

Walker returned from Paris in 1720. Bentley now published his 'Proposals for Printing,' in which he explains the principles of his edition. He observes that the printed texts of the New Testament, Greek and Latin, are based on comparatively recent manuscripts. His aim has been to recover from older Latin manuscripts the text of the Latin 'Vulgate' as formed by Jerome [about 383 A. D.], and to compare this with the oldest Greek manuscripts. Jerome's version was not only strictly literal, but aimed at representing the very order of the Greek words. Where it agrees with our oldest Greek manuscripts, there, Bentley argues, we may recognise the Greek text as received by the Church at the time of the Council of Nice (325 A. D.) 'and two centuries after.' This test will set aside about four-fifths of those 30,000 various readings which 'crowd the pages' of the editions. The text of the New Testament can be fixed 'to the smallest nicety.' As corroborative evidence, Bentley further proposes to use the Syriac, Coptic, Gothic, and Æthiopic versions (in which Walton's Polyglott would help him), and the citations by the Greek and Latin Fathers, within the first five centuries. Those centuries are to be the limit of the various readings which his foot-notes will exhibit. And he reassures the public mind on a point which might well occasion uneasiness. 'The author is very sensible, that in the Sacred Writings there's no place for conjectures or emendations.' He will not 'alter one letter in the text' without the authorities given in the notes, but will relegate conjectural criticism to the *Prolegomena*. The

work is to be 'a Charter, a Magna Charta, to the whole Christian Church; to last when all the ancient MSS. here quoted may be lost and extinguished.' As a specimen of his edition, Bentley subjoined the last chapter of Revelation, with notes supporting those readings which he restores to the text, while the 'received' readings, when displaced, are given in the margin.

The 'Proposals' had scarcely appeared when they were anonymously attacked by Dr Conyers Middleton, who was then in the midst of his feud with Bentley. This was the year of the South-Sea scheme, and Dr Middleton allowed himself to write of 'Bentley's Bubble.' Bentley's reply—founded on the supposition that his assailant was Colbatch—was still more deplorable. Middleton then printed, with his name, 'Some Further Remarks,' criticising the 'Proposals' more in detail, and on some points with force. Colbatch writes to Middleton: 'According to all that I can speak with or hear from, you have laid Bentley flat upon his back.' Bentley writes to Atterbury (now Bishop of Rochester): 'I scorn to read the rascal's book; but if your Lordship will send me any part which you think the strongest, I will undertake to answer it before night.'

Meanwhile the public subscription invited by the 'Proposals' already amounted, in 1721, to two thousand pounds. Amid many distractions, Bentley was certainly continuing to digest his materials. At some time before August, 1726, he received a most important accession to them. The 'Vatican' manuscript—which contains the Greek Testament in capital letters as far as the middle of Hebrews ix.—was collated for Bentley by an Italian named Mico. Thomas Bentley, the nephew, being at Rome in 1726, tested



Mico's work in three chapters, but did not, as has been supposed, make a complete independent collation. Subsequently the Vaticanus was again collated for Bentley, so far as concerned traces of hands other than 'the first,' by the Abbé Rulotta, whose services were procured by the Baron de Stosch,—then employed in Italy by the British Government to watch the Pretender. Rulotta's collation reached Bentley in July, 1729. Its accuracy, as compared with that of Angelo Mai, was recognised by Tischendorf, when he saw it at Trinity College in 1855. In that same summer of 1729 Bentley was making inquiries regarding a manuscript, in the Library of the University of Dublin, which contains the text of the three witnesses (1 John v. 7, 8): it is that which is known, from the name of the donor, as the Codex Montfortianus, and is not older than the fifteenth century. Considerable uneasiness appears to have been felt, after the issue of Bentley's 'Proposals,' at the prospect of his omitting that text, against which he had decided in his lost dissertation of 1717. It is unnecessary to remind readers that more recent criticism has finally rejected the words, for which there is no evidence in Latin before at least the latter part of the fifth century, and none in any other language before the fourteenth.

Here—in the summer of 1729—it has usually been said, as by Monk, that all vestige of the proposed edition ends. A slight but interesting trace, however, carries us three years further. From a marginal note in a copy of the quarto New Testament of Geneva (1620), preserved in the Wake collection at Christ Church, Oxford, it appears that John Walker was still making collations in 1732. These, it cannot be doubted, were



auxiliary to Bentley's edition, for which the 'Proposals' designate Walker as 'overseer and corrector of the press.' Seven years more of working life remained to Bentley, before the paralytic seizure which overtook him in 1739. Why was his edition never completed and published? We need not pause on the curiously inadequate reason suggested by Wetstein—that Bentley resented the refusal of the Government to remit the duty on foreign paper which he desired to import. The dates alone refute that, for the incident occurred in 1721. Probably the answer is to be sought in a combination of two principal causes,—the worry of litigation which harassed him from 1729 to 1738; and a growing sense of complexity in the problem of the text, especially after he became better acquainted with the Vatican readings.

Bentley's materials were bequeathed by him to his nephew Richard, possibly in the hope that they might be edited and published. Nothing was done, however. Dr Richard Bentley returned the subscriptions, and at his death in 1786 bequeathed his uncle's collections to Trinity College, where they have since been preserved. Several volumes contain the collations made by Bentley himself or by his various assistants—including Mico's and Rulotta's collations of the Vaticanus. The point which Bentley's critical work had reached is best shown by a folio copy of the Greek and Latin Vulgate (Paris, 'apud Claudium Sonnum,' 1628). 'Having interleaved it'—he writes to Wetstein—'I have made my essay of restoring both text and version [*i.e.* both Greek and Latin]; and they agree and tally even to a miracle; but there will be (as near as I can guess) near 6000 variations, great and little, from the received Greek and Latin exemplars.' The notes on the interleaved pages are in Bentley's hand-

writing from the beginning to the end of the New Testament. He used this volume as a general register of results obtained by his collations,—the readings of the Vaticanus, which came to him after nearly all the rest, being added in paler ink. It is from this folio that Mr Ellis prints (besides excerpts) the whole of the Epistle to the Galatians, in his *Bentleii Critica Sacra* (1862); though it is to be observed that we cannot assume Bentley's final acceptance of the text, as there printed, except in the points on which he has expressly touched. The notes on Revelation xxii. stand in the folio *verbatim* as they were printed in the 'Proposals' of 1720. Speaking generally of the work exhibited by the folio, we may say that its leading characteristics are two;—wealth of patristic citation, and laborious attention to the order of words. It may further be observed that there does not appear to be any trace of that confident temerity by which Bentley's treatment of the classics was so often marked. Had his edition been published, the promise made in the 'Proposals' would, in all probability, have been strictly kept. Conjectural criticisms would have been confined to the *Prolegomena*.

A question of great interest remains. What was the value of the principle on which Bentley founded his design, and how far has that principle been fruitful in later work? Bentley's undertaking (as briefly defined in his letter to Dr Wake) was, 'to give an edition of the Greek Testament exactly as it was in the best exemplars at the time of the Council of Nice' (325 A.D.). He saw that, for this, our ultimate witnesses are the Greek manuscripts nearest in age to that time. But it might still be asked: How can we be sure that these oldest Greek manuscripts represent a text *generally*

*received* at the time when they were written? Bentley replied: I compare them with the oldest received Latin translation that I can find. Such a received Latin version must have represented a received Greek text. Where it confirms our oldest Greek manuscripts, there is the strongest evidence that their text is not merely ancient, but also is that text which the Church received at the time when the Latin version was made. The evidence of the Fathers, and of ancient versions other than Latin, may help to confirm the proof.

These, then, are the two features of Bentley's conception:—the appeal from recent documents to *antiquity*,—viz. to the first five centuries; and the appeal to *Greek and Latin consent*.

In the particular application of these ideas, Bentley laboured under certain disadvantages which were either almost or altogether inseparable from the time at which he worked. First, it was then scarcely possible that he should adequately realise the history of the Greek text previous to his chosen date, the Council of Nice. The Alexandrine manuscript, of the fifth century, containing the whole of the New Testament in Greek capital letters, had been presented to Charles I. by Cyril Lucar, the Patriarch of Constantinople, in 1628. This was believed to be, as Bentley calls it, 'the oldest and best in the world.' It was regarded as the typical ancient manuscript, not only by the earlier English editors, Walton, Fell and Mill, but by Bengel in his edition of 1734. This view has since been modified by data, some of which were not then available. Not less than two or three generations before the Council of Nice (325 A.D.), according to the more recent investigations, two influential types of text had already

diverged from the apostolic original. These have been called the 'Western' and the 'Alexandrian.' Both are 'Pre-Syrian'—to use the convenient term adopted by Dr Westcott and Dr Hort—in distinction from the '*Syrian*' Greek text formed at Antioch at some time between 250 and 350 A.D. The 'Syrian' text was eclectic, drawing on both the aberrant Pre-Syrian types, 'Western' and 'Alexandrian,' as well as on texts independent of those two aberrations. In a revised form, the Syrian text finally prevailed; a result due partly to the subsequent contraction of Greek Christendom, partly to its centralisation at Constantinople, the ecclesiastical daughter of Antioch.

Four manuscripts of the 'uncial' class (written in capitals, as distinguished from 'cursive') stand out as the oldest Greek copies of the New Testament. Two belong probably to the middle of the fourth century. One of these is the Vatican manuscript, of which Bentley had no detailed knowledge at the time when he published his 'Proposals.' Its text is Pre-Syrian, and thus far unique, that in most parts it is free from both Western and Alexandrian corruptions. The other fourth-century manuscript is the Sinaitic, of which the New Testament portion first came into Tischendorf's hands in 1859. This also is Pre-Syrian, but with elements both Western and Alexandrian. The Codex Alexandrinus, which Bentley's age deemed the oldest and best, is fundamentally Syrian in the Gospels: in the other books it is still partially Syrian, though Pre-Syrian readings, Western and Alexandrian included, are proportionally more numerous. Thus it contains throughout at least one disturbing element which is absent from the Sinaitic, and at least three which in most of the books are absent



from the Vaticanus. The fourth of the oldest uncials is one which Wetstein twice collated at Paris for Bentley,—that known as the Codex Ephraemi, because some writings attributed to Ephraem Syrus have been traced over the New Testament. It is coeval with the Alexandrinus, belonging to the fifth century; and, while partly Syrian, it also contains much derived from the earlier texts. In addition to the general but erroneous belief as to the unique value of the Alexandrine manuscript, a singular accident (noticed by Dr Hort) must have greatly strengthened Bentley's belief in the decisiveness of the agreement between that document and the Vulgate. Jerome, in preparing the Vulgate, appears to have used a Greek manuscript which happened to have many peculiar readings in common with the Alexandrinus, and to have been partly derived from the same original.

The reader will now be able to imagine the effect which must have been gradually wrought on Bentley's mind, as he came to know the Vaticanus better. With his rare tact and insight, he could hardly fail to perceive that this was a document of first-rate importance, yet one of which the evidence could not be satisfactorily reconciled with the comparatively simple hypothesis which he had based on the assumed primacy of the Alexandrine. For his immediate purpose, it was of far less importance that he was partly in error as to his Latin standard. His view on that subject is connected with a curious instance of his boldness in conjectural criticism. Referring to 'interpretationes' or versions of the Bible, Augustine once says, 'Let the Italian (*Itala*) be preferred to the rest, since it combines greater closeness with clearness' (*De Doctr. Chr.* II. 15). Bentley, with a rashness which even he seldom exceeded, declared



that the 'Italian version is a mere dream:' *Itala*, in Augustine, should be *illa*. Archbishop Potter's *usitata*, viewed merely as an emendation, was far more intrinsically probable; but Cardinal Wiseman's arguments in his letters (1832—3),—reinforced by Lachmann's illustrations,—have placed it beyond reasonable doubt that Augustine really wrote *Itala*. As to his meaning, all that is certain is that he intended to distinguish this 'Italian' text from the 'African' (*codices Afros*) which he mentions elsewhere. Of a Latin version, or Latin versions, prior to Jerome's—which was a recension, with the aid of Greek MSS., not a new and original version—Bentley could scarcely know anything. The documents were first made accessible in Bianchini's *Evangeliarium Quadruplex* (1749), and the Benedictine Sabatier's *Bibliorum Sacrorum Latinae Versiones Antiquae* (1751). It must be remembered, however, that Bentley's aim was to restore the text as received in the fourth century; he did not profess to restore the text of an earlier age.

Bentley's edition would have given to the world the readings of all the older Greek MSS. then known, and an apparatus, still unequalled in its range of authorities, for the text of the Latin Vulgate New Testament: but it would have done more still. Whatever might have been its defects, it would have represented the earliest attempt to construct a text of the New Testament directly from the most ancient documents, without reference to any printed edition. A century passed before such an attempt was again made. Bentley's immediate successors in this field did not work on his distinctive lines. In 1726 Bengel's Greek Testament was almost ready for the press, and he writes thus:—'What principally holds me back is the delay of Bentley's promised

edition...Bentley possesses invaluable advantages; but he has prepossessions of his own which may prove very detrimental to the Received Text:—this ‘received text’ being, in fact, the Syrian text in its mediæval form. Bengel’s text, published at Tübingen in 1734, was not based on Bentley’s principles, though the value of these is incidentally recognised in his discussions. Wetstein’s edition of 1751—2 supplied fresh materials; in criticism, however, he represents rather a reaction from Bentley’s view, for his tendency was to find traces of corruption in any close agreement between the ancient Greek MSS. and the ancient versions. Griesbach prepared the way for a properly critical text by seeking an historical basis in the genealogy of the documents.

But it was Lachmann, in his small edition of 1831, who first gave a modified fulfilment to Bentley’s design, by publishing a text irrespective of the printed tradition, and based wholly on the ancient authorities. Lachmann also applied Bentley’s principle of Greek and Latin consent. As Bentley had proposed to use the Vulgate Latin, so Lachmann used what he deemed the best MSS. of the Old Latin,—combined with some Latin Fathers and with such Greek MSS. as were manifestly of the same type. Lachmann compared this group of witnesses from the West with the other or ‘Eastern’ Greek authorities; and, where they agreed, he laid stress on that agreement as a security for the genuineness of readings. Bentley had intended to print the Greek text and the Vulgate Latin side by side. Lachmann, in his larger edition (1840—1852), so far executed this plan as to print at the foot of the page a greatly improved Vulgate text, based chiefly on the two oldest MSS. For Lach-

mann, however, the authority of the Vulgate was only accessory (*'Hieronymo pro se auctore non utimur'*), on account of the higher antiquity of the Old Latin. Those who taunted Lachmann with 'aping' Bentley (*'simia Bentleii'*) misrepresented both. It is to Lachmann and to Tregelles that we primarily owe the revived knowledge and appreciation in this country of Bentley's labours on the New Testament, to which Tischendorf also accords recognition in his edition of 1859.

Bentley's place in the history of sacred criticism agrees with the general character of his work in other provinces. His ideas were in advance of his age, and also of the means at his disposal for executing them. He gave an initial impulse, of which the effect could not be destroyed by the limitation or defeat of his personal labours. After a hundred years of comparative neglect, his conception reappeared as an element of acknowledged value in the methods of riper research. The edition of the New Testament published last year (1881) by Dr Westcott and Dr Hort represents a stage of criticism which necessarily lay beyond Bentley's horizon. Yet it is the maturest embodiment of principles which had in him their earliest exponent; and those very delays which closed over his great design may in part be regarded as attesting his growing perception of the rule on which the Cambridge Editors so justly lay stress;—'Knowledge of documents should precede final judgement upon readings.'

## CHAPTER XI.

### ENGLISH STYLE. EDITION OF *PARADISE LOST*.

As a writer of English, Bentley is represented by the Dissertation on Phalaris, the Boyle Lectures, the Remarks on a Discourse of Free-thinking, sermons, and letters. These fall mainly within the period from 1690 to 1730. During the earlier half of Bentley's life the canon of polite prose was Dryden or Temple; during the latter half it was Addison. Bentley's English is stamped, as we shall see, with the mind of his age, but has been very little influenced by any phase of its manner. His style is thoroughly individual; it is, in fact, the man. The most striking trait is the nervous, homely English. 'Commend me to the man that with a thick hide and solid forehead can stand bluff against plain matter of fact.' 'If the very first Epistle, of nine lines only, has taken me up four pages in scouring, what a sweet piece of work should I have of it to cleanse all the rest for them!' 'Alas, poor Sophist! 'twas ill luck he took none of the money, to fee his advocates lustily; for this is like to be a hard brush.' The 'polite' writers after the Restoration had discarded such English as vulgar; and we have seen that Boyle's Oxford friends complained

of Bentley's 'descending to low and mean ways of speech.' But, if we allow for the special influence of scriptural language on the *Pilgrim's Progress*, Bentley drew from the same well as John Bunyan, who died when Bentley was sixteen. Yet Bentley's simple English is racy in a way peculiar to him. It has the tone of a strong mind which goes straight to the truth; it is pointed with the sarcasm of one whose own knowledge is thorough and exact, but who is accustomed to find imposture wrapped up in fine or vague words, and takes an ironical delight in using the very homeliest images and phrases which accurately fit the matter in hand. No one has excelled Bentley in the power of making a pretentious fallacy absurd by the mere force of translation into simple terms; no writer of English has shown greater skill in touching the hidden springs of its native humour.

Here Bentley is the exponent, in his own way, of a spirit which animated the age of Addison and Pope, —the assertion of clear common sense,—the desire, as Mr Leslie Stephen says, 'to expel the mystery which had served as a cloak for charlatans.' Bentley's English style reflects, however, another side on which he was not in sympathy with the tendencies of contemporary literature. A scholar of profound learning and original vigour had things to say which could not always be said with the sparkling ease of coffee-house conversation. Bentley's colloquialism is that of strenuous argument, not that of polished small talk. As an outward symbol of his separateness from the 'wits,' we may observe his use of the Latin element in English. The sermons of Jeremy Taylor, whose life closed soon after Bentley's began, abound in portentous Latin words, —*longanimity*, *recidivation*, *coaculation*. Bentley has



nothing like these ; yet the Boyle party, who charged his style with vulgarity, charged it also with pedantry.

He answers this in the Dissertation on Phalaris. ‘If such a general censure had been always fastened upon those that enrich our language from the Latin and Greek stores, what a fine condition had our language been in ! ’Tis well known, it has scarce any words, besides monosyllables, of its native growth ; and were all the rest imported and introduced by *pedants*?... The words in my book, which he excepts against, are *commentitious*, *repudiate*, *concede*, *aliene*, *vernacular*, *timid*, *negoce*, *putid*, and *idiom* ; every one of which were in print, before I used them ; and most of them, before I was born.’ We note in passing that all but three of this list—*commentitious*, *putid*, *negoce*—have lived ; and we remember De Quincey’s story about *negoce*,—that when he was a boy at school (about the year 1798) the use of this word by the master suggested to him that *otium cum dignitate* might be rendered ‘oce in combination with dignity,’—which made him laugh aloud, and thereby forfeit all ‘oce’ for three days. Then Bentley remarks that the ‘Examiner’s’ illustrious relative, Robert Boyle, had used *ignore* and *recognosce*—‘which nobody has yet thought fit to follow him in.’ It is curious to find De Quincey saying, in 1830, that *ignore* is Irish, and obsolete in England ‘except in the use of grand juries ;’ and even in 1857, it seems, some purists demurred to it. ‘I would rather use, not my own words only, but even these too’—Bentley concludes—‘than that single word of the Examiner’s, *cotemporary*, which is a downright barbarism. For the Latins never use *co* for *con*, except before a vowel, as *coequal*, *coeternal* ; but, before a consonant, they either retain the N, as *contemporary*, *constitution* ; or

melt it into another letter, as *collection*, *comprehension*. So that the Examiner's *cotemporary* is a word of his *coposition*, for which the learned world will *cogratulate* him.'

Bentley's view as to the probable future of the English language appears from another place in the Dissertation. 'The great alterations it has undergone in the two last centuries [1500—1700] are principally owing to that vast stock of Latin words which we have transplanted into our own soil : which being now in a manner exhausted, one may easily presage that it will not have such changes in the two next centuries. Nay, it were no difficult contrivance, if the public had any regard to it, to make the English tongue immutable, unless hereafter some foreign nation shall invade and overrun us.' This is in seeming contrast with Bentley's own description of language as an organism liable to continual change, 'like the perspiring bodies of living creatures in perpetual motion and alteration.' But the inconsistency, I think, is only apparent. He refers to the English vocabulary as a whole. By 'immutable' he does not mean to exclude the action of time on details of form or usage, but rather points to such a standard as the French Academy sought to fix for the French language. Since the end of the seventeenth century, the ordinary English vocabulary has lost some foreign words, and acquired others ; on the whole, the foreign element has probably not gained ground. Here is a rough test. Mr Marsh has estimated the percentage of English to non-English words in several English classics. Swift's is about 70 (in one essay, only 68) ; Gibbon's, 70 ; Johnson's, 72 ; Macaulay's, 75. Bentley's own average would, I think, be nearly, if not quite, as high as Macaulay's, and for a

like reason; his literary diction was comparatively close to the living speech of educated men in his day. This, indeed, is a marked feature of all Bentley's work, whatever the subject or form may be; the author's personality is so vividly present in it that it is less like writing than speaking.

As in Shakspeare, we meet with those faults of grammar which people were apt to make in talking, or which had even come to be thought idiomatic, through the habit of the ear. Bentley can say, 'neither of these two improvements *are* registered,'—'*those* sort of requests,'—'I'll dispute with nobody about *nothing*' (meaning, 'about anything'),—'no goat had been there *neither*.' This sympathy with living speech, and comparative negligence of rigid syntax, may help us to see how Bentley's genius was in accord with Greek, the voice of life, rather than with Latin, the expression of law. The scholarly trait of Bentley's style is not precise composition, but propriety in the use of words, whether of English or of Latin growth. Some of these Latinisms, though etymologically right, seem odd now: 'an acuteness *familiar* to him,' *i.e.* peculiarly his own: '*excision*' for 'utter destruction:' 'a plain and *punctual* testimony,'—*i.e.* just to the point. Yet, on the whole, Bentley's vocabulary contains a decidedly larger proportion of pure English than was then usual in the higher literature. No one is less pedantic. At his best he is, in his own way, matchless: at his worst, he is sometimes rough or clumsy; but he is never weak, and never anything else than natural. His style in hand-to-hand critical combat—as in the Phalaris Dissertation—is that by which he is best known. I may here give a short specimen of a different manner, from a Sermon which he preached at

St James's in 1717. He is speaking on the words, 'none of us liveth to himself' (Romans xiv. 7):—

Without society and government, man would be found in a worse condition than the very beasts of the field. That divine ray of reason, which is his privilege above the brutes, would only serve in that case to make him more sensible of his wants, and more uneasy and melancholic under them. Now, if society and mutual friendship be so essential and necessary to the happiness of mankind, 'tis a clear consequence, that all such obligations as are necessary to maintain society and friendship are incumbent on every man. No one, therefore, that lives in society, and expects his share in the benefits of it, can be said to live to himself.

No, he lives to his prince and his country; he lives to his parents and his family; he lives to his friends and to all under his trust; he lives even to foreigners, under the mutual sanctions and stipulations of alliance and commerce; nay, he lives to the whole race of mankind: whatsoever has the character of man, and wears the same image of God that he does, is truly his brother, and, on account of that natural consanguinity, has a just claim to his kindness and benevolence.... The nearer one can arrive to this universal charity, this benevolence to all human race, the more he has of the divine character imprinted on his soul; for *God is love*, says the apostle; he delights in the happiness of all his creatures. To this public principle we owe our thanks for the inventors of sciences and arts; for the founders of kingdoms, and first institutors of laws; for the heroes that hazard or abandon their own lives for the dearer love of their country; for the statesmen that generously sacrifice their private profit and ease to establish the public peace and prosperity for ages to come.

And if nature's still voice be listened to, this is really not only the noblest, but the pleasantest employment. For though gratitude, and a due acknowledgment and return of kindness received, is a desirable good, and implanted in our nature by God himself, as a spur to mutual beneficence, yet, in the



whole, 'tis certainly much more pleasant to love than to be beloved again. For the sweetness and felicity of life consists in duly exerting and employing those sociable passions of the soul, those natural inclinations to charity and compassion. And he that has given his mind a contrary turn and bias, that has made it the seat of selfishness and of unconcernment for all about him, has deprived himself of the greatest comfort and relish of life. Whilst he foolishly designs to live to himself alone, he loses that very thing which makes life itself desirable. So that, in a word, if we are created by our Maker to enjoy happiness and contentment in our being; if we are born for society, and friendship, and mutual assistance; if we are designed to live as men, and not as wild beasts of the desert; we must truly say, in the words of our text, that none of us *liveth to himself*.

It will be noticed that in the above extract there are no sentences of unwieldy length, no involved constructions, such as usually encumbered the more elaborate prose of the seventeenth century. Comparatively short sentences, and lucid structure, are general marks of Bentley's English; and here, again, he reflects the desire of his age for *clearness*. It has been said that the special work of the eighteenth century was to form prose style. Bentley has his peculiar place among its earlier masters.

Mention is due to the only English verses which he is known to have written after boyhood. When Johnson recited them, Adam Smith remarked that they were 'very well; very well.' 'Yes, they *are* very well, Sir,' said Johnson: 'but you may observe in what manner they are well. They are the forcible verses of a man of strong mind, but not accustomed to write verse; for there is some uncouthness in the expression.' A Trinity undergraduate had written a graceful imitation of Horace's Ode, *Angustam amice pauperiem pati* (III. ii.);



with which Bentley was so much pleased that he straightway composed a parody on it. The gist of the young man's piece is that an exemplary student is secure of applause and happiness; Bentley sings that he is pretty sure to be attacked, and very likely to be shelved. The choice of typical men is interesting; Newton, and the geologist, John Woodward, for science; Selden, for erudition; for theological controversy, Whiston, whom the University had expelled on account of his Arianism. (The following is Monk's version: Boswell's differs in a few points, mostly for the worse; but in v. 11 rightly gives 'days and nights' for 'day and night.')

Who strives to mount Parnassus' hill,  
And thence poetic laurels bring,  
Must first acquire due force and skill,  
Must fly with swan's or eagle's wing.

Who Nature's treasures would explore,  
Her mysteries and arcana know,  
Must high, as lofty NEWTON, soar,  
Must stoop, as delving WOODWARD, low.

Who studies ancient laws and rites,  
Tongues, arts, and arms, all history,  
Must drudge, like SELDEN, days and nights,  
And in the endless labour die.

Who travels\* in religious jars,  
Truth mix'd with error, shade with rays,  
Like WHISTON, wanting pyx and stars,  
In ocean wide or sinks or strays.

\* *travails*

But grant our hero's hope, long toil  
And comprehensive genius crown,  
All sciences, all arts his spoil,  
Yet what reward, or what renown?

ENVY, innate in vulgar souls,  
    Envy steps in and stops his rise;  
Envy with poison'd tarnish fouls  
    His lustre, and his worth decries.

He lives inglorious or in want,  
    To college and old books confin'd;  
Instead of learn'd, he's call'd pedant;  
    Dunces advanc'd, he's left behind:  
Yet left content, a genuine stoic he,  
    Great without patron, rich without South-sea.

The third line from the end is significant. He had been mentioned for a bishopric once or twice, but passed over. In 1709, when Chichester was vacant, Baron Spanheim and the Earl of Pembroke (then Lord High Admiral) had vainly used their interest for Bentley. We have seen that in 1724—about two years after these verses were written—he declined the see of Bristol.

Now we must consider Bentley's criticisms on *Paradise Lost*. In 1725 an edition of that poem had appeared with a *Life of Milton* by Elijah Fenton (1683—1730), who helped Pope in translating the *Odyssey*. Fenton incidentally suggested some corrections of words which, he thought, might have taken the place of other words similar in sound. This seems to have put Bentley on his mettle: at any rate, he is said to have meditated notes in 1726. His edition of *Paradise Lost* appeared in 1732, and is said to have been immediately due to a wish expressed by Queen Caroline 'that the great critic should exercise his talents upon an edition' of Milton, 'and thus gratify those readers who could not enjoy his celebrated lucubrations on classical writers.' It may safely be assumed, however, that the royal lady did not contemplate any such work as our

Aristarchus produced. Probably she thought that the learning, especially classical learning, which enters so largely into Milton's epic would afford a good field for illustrative commentary to a classical scholar.

'Tis but common justice'—Bentley's preface begins —'to let the purchaser know what he is to expect in this new edition of *Paradise Lost*. Our celebrated Author, when he compos'd this poem, being obnoxious to the Government, poor, friendless, and, what is worst of all, blind with a *gutta serena*, could only dictate his verses to be writ by another.' The amanuensis made numerous mistakes in spelling and pointing; Bentley says that he has tacitly corrected these merely clerical errors. But there was a more serious offender than the amanuensis; namely, the *editor*. This person owes his existence to Bentley's vigorous imagination. 'The friend or acquaintance, whoever he was, to whom Milton committed his copy and the overseeing of the press, did so vilely execute that trust, that *Paradise* under his ignorance and audaciousness may be said to be *twice lost*.' This editor is responsible for many careless changes of word or phrase: for instance:

on the secret top

Of Horeb or of Sinai—

'secret' is this editor's blunder for 'sacred.' Bentley gives 48 examples of such culpable carelessness. But even that is not the worst. 'This suppos'd Friend (call'd in these Notes the Editor), knowing Milton's bad circumstances'—the evil days and evil tongues—profited by them to perpetrate a deliberate fraud of the most heartless kind. Having a turn for verse-writing, he actually interpolated many lines of his own: Bentley gives 66 of them as examples. They can always be

‘detected by their own silliness and unfitness.’ So much for the half-educated amanuensis and the wholly depraved editor. But Milton himself has made some ‘slips and inadvertencies too:’ there are ‘some inconsistencies [sic] in the system and plan of his poem, for want of his revisal of the whole before its publication.’ Sixteen examples are then given. These are beyond merely verbal emendation. They require ‘a change both of words and sense.’ Bentley lays stress on the fact that he merely suggests remedies for the errors due to Milton himself, but does not ‘obtrude’ them: adding, ‘it is hoped, even these will not be found absurd, or disagreeing from the Miltonian character;’—and he quotes from Virgil: ‘I, too, have written verses: me also the shepherds call a singer; but I will not lightly believe them.’ This is perhaps the only thing in the preface that distinctly suggests senility: it afterwards gave rise to this doggrel:—

How could vile sycophants contrive  
A lie so gross to raise,  
Which even Bentley can’t believe,  
Though spoke in his own praise?

The preface concludes with a glowing tribute to Milton’s great poem. Labouring under all this ‘miserable deformity by the press,’ it could still charm, like ‘Terence’s beautiful Virgin, who in spite of neglect, sorrow, and beggarly habit, did yet appear so very amiable.’ There is some real pathos in the following passage,—remarkable as the only one (so far as I know) in Bentley’s writings where he alludes to the long troubles of his College life as causes of *pain*, and not merely of interruption:—

But I wonder not so much at the poem itself, though worthy of all wonder; as that the author could so abstract his

thoughts from his own troubles, as to be able to make it; that confin'd in a narrow and to him a dark chamber, surrounded with cares and fears, he could spatiate at large through the compass of the whole universe, and through all heaven beyond it; could survey all periods of time, from before the creation to the consummation of all things. This theory [*i.e.* contemplation], no doubt, was a great solace to him in his affliction; but it shows in him a greater strength of spirit, that made him capable of such a solace. And it would almost seem to me to be peculiar to him; had not experience by others taught me, that there is that power in the human mind, supported with innocence and *conscia virtus*; that can make it quite shake off all outward uneasinesses, and involve itself secure and pleas'd in its own integrity and entertainment.

Bentley appears to have fully anticipated the strong prejudice which his recension of Milton would have to meet. Forty years ago, he says, 'it would have been prudence to have suppress'd' it, 'for fear of injuring one's rising fortune.' But now seventy years admonished him to pay his critical debts, regardless of worldly loss or gain. 'I made the Notes extempore, and put them to the press as soon as made; without any apprehension of growing leaner by censures or plumper by commendations.' So ends the preface.

Bentley's work on Milton is of a kind which can be fairly estimated by a few specimens, for its essential character is the same throughout. We need not dwell on those 'inconsistencies in the plan and system of the poem' which Bentley ascribes to Milton himself. Some of these are real, others vanish before a closer examination; but none of those which really exist can be removed without rewriting the passages affected. Bentley admits this; and to criticise his changes would be merely to compare



the respective merits of Milton and Bentley as poets. Nor, again, need we concern ourselves with those alleged faults of the amanuensis in spelling and pointing which are tacitly corrected. The proper test of Bentley's work, as a critical recension of *Paradise Lost*, is his treatment of those blemishes which he imputes to the supposed 'editor.' These are of two kinds,—wilful interpolations and inadvertent changes. An example of alleged interpolation is afforded by the following passage (*Par. Lost* i. 338—355), where the fallen angels are assembling at the summons of their leader :—

As when the potent rod  
Of Amram's son, in Egypt's evil day,  
Waved round the coast, up-called a pitchy cloud  
Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind,  
That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung  
Like Night, and darkened all the land of Nile;  
So numberless were those bad Angels seen  
Hovering on wing under the cope of Hell,  
'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires;  
Till, as a signal given, the uplifted spear  
Of their great Sultan waving to direct  
Their course, in even balance down they light  
On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain:  
*A multitude like which the populous North  
Poured never from her frozen loins to pass  
Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons  
Came like a deluge on the South, and spread  
Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands.*

The last five lines are rejected by Bentley as due to the fraudulent editor. Here is his note :—

After he [Milton] had compared the Devils for number to the cloud of locusts that darken'd all Egypt, as before to the leaves that cover the ground in autumn [v. 302, 'Thick

as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks In Vallombrosa'], 'tis both to clog and to lessen the thought, to mention here the Northern Excursions, when all human race would be too few. Besides the diction is faulty; *frozen loins* are improper for *populousness*; Gibraltar is a new name, since those inroads were made; and to spread from thence to the Libyan sands, is to spread over the surface of the sea.

It would be idle to multiply instances of 'interpolation:' this is a fair average sample. I will now illustrate the other class of 'editorial' misdeeds,—careless alterations. Book vi. 509:—

up they turned  
Wide the celestial soil, and saw beneath  
The originals of Nature in their crude  
Conception; sulphurous and nitrous foam  
*They found, they mingled, and, with subtle art*  
Concocted and adusted, they reduced  
To blackest grain, and into store conveyed.

Bentley annotates:—

It must be very subtle Art, even in Devils themselves, to adust brimstone and saltpetre. But then he mentions only these two materials, which without *charcoal* can never make gunpowder.

Here, then, is the last part of the passage, rescued from the editor, and restored to Milton:—

sulphurous and nitrous foam  
*They pound, they mingle, and with sooty chark*  
Concocted and adusted, they reduce  
To blackest grain, and into store convey.

Let us take next the last lines of the poem (xii. 641 f.):—

They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld  
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,  
Waved over by that flaming brand; the gate  
With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.

Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon ;  
 The world was all before them, where to choose  
 Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.  
*They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,  
 Through Eden took their solitary way.*

Addison had remarked that the poem would close better if the last two lines were absent. Bentley,—without naming Addison, to whom he alludes as ‘an ingenious and celebrated writer,’—deprecates their omission. ‘Without them Adam and Eve would be left in the Territory and Suburbane of Paradise, in the very view of the *dreadful faces.*’ At the same time, Bentley holds that the two lines have been gravely corrupted by the editor. These are his grounds:—

Milton ‘tells us before, that Adam, upon hearing Michael’s predictions, was even surcharg’d with joy (XII. 372); was replete with joy and wonder (468); was in doubt, whether he should repent of, or rejoice in, his fall (475); was in great peace of thought (558); and Eve herself was *not sad*, but full of *consolation* (620). Why then does this distich dismiss our first parents in anguish, and the reader in melancholy? And how can the expression be justified, ‘with wand’ring steps and slow’? Why *wand’ring*? Erratic steps? Very improper: when in the line before, they were guided by Providence. And why *slow*? when even Eve profess’d her readiness and alacrity for the journey (614):—‘*But now lead on; In me is no delay.*’ And why ‘their solitary way’? All words to represent a sorrowful parting? when even their former walks in Paradise were as solitary as their way now: there being nobody besides them two, both here and there. Shall I therefore, after so many prior presumptions, presume at last to offer a distich, as close as may be to the author’s words, and entirely agreeable to his scheme?

*Then hand in hand with social steps their way  
 Through Eden took, with heav’nly comfort cheer’d.’*

The total number of emendations proposed by Bentley in *Paradise Lost* rather exceeds 800. Not a word of the received text is altered in his edition; but the parts believed to be corrupt are printed in italics, with the proposed remedy in the margin. Most of the new readings aim at stricter propriety in the use of language, better logic, or clearer syntax,—briefly, at ‘correctness.’ It is a significant fact that Pope liked many of them, and wrote ‘*pulchre*,’ ‘*bene*,’ ‘*recte*’ opposite them in his copy of Bentley’s edition,—in spite of that line in the *Dunciad* which describes our critic as having ‘humbled Milton’s strains.’ But even where we concede that the new reading is what Milton ought to have given, we can nearly always feel morally certain that he did not give it. I have found only one instance which strikes me as an exception. It is in that passage of Book VI. (332) which describes Satan wounded by the sword of the archangel Michael :—

from the gash

A stream of nectarous humour issuing flowed  
Sanguine, such as celestial Spirits may bleed.

‘Nectar’ is the wine of the gods; Homer has another name for the etherial juice which flows in their veins. Thus when Diomedes wounds the goddess Aphrodite :—  
‘*The immortal blood of the goddess flowed forth, even ichor, such as flows in the veins of blessed gods*’ (Iliad v. 389). For ‘nectarous’ Bentley proposed ‘ichorous.’ The form of Milton’s verse—‘such as celestial Spirits may bleed’—indicates that he was thinking of the Iliad, and no poet was less likely than Milton to confuse ‘nectar’ with ‘ichor.’ Bentley’s correction, if not true, deserves to be so.

Johnson has characterised Bentley's hypothesis of the 'editor' in well-known terms:—'a supposition rash and groundless, if he thought it true; and vile and pernicious, if, as is said, he in private allowed it to be false.' Bentley cannot be impaled on the second horn of the dilemma. No one who has read his preface, or, who understands the bent of his mind, will entertain the idea that he wished to impose on his readers by a fiction which he himself did not believe. Monk has another explanation. 'The ideal agency of the reviser of *Paradise Lost* was only a device to take off the odium of perpetually condemning and altering the words of the great poet... At the same time, *he was neither deceived himself, nor intended to deceive others.*' But Monk has not observed that a passage in Bentley's preface expressly excludes this plausible view. 'If any one' (says Bentley) 'fancy this *Persona* of an editor to be a mere Fantom, a Fiction, an Artifice to skreen Milton himself; let him consider these four and sole changes made in the second edition : 1. 505, v. 638, xi. 485, 551....If the Editor durst insert his forgeries, even in the second edition, when the Poem and its Author had slowly grown to a vast reputation; what durst he not do in the first, under the poet's poverty, infamy, and an universal odium from the royal and triumphant party?' The *Paradise Regained* and the *Samson Agonistes* are uncorrupted, Bentley adds, because Milton had then dismissed this editor.

There can be no doubt, I think, that Bentley's theory of the depraved editor was broached in perfect good faith. True, he supposes this editor to have taken fewer liberties with Book XII,—an assumption which suited his desire to publish before Parliament met. But that is only an instance of a man bringing himself to believe



just what he wishes to believe. How he could believe it, is another question. If he had consulted the *Life of Milton* by the poet's nephew, Edward Phillips (1694), he would have found some adverse testimony. *Paradise Lost* was originally written down in small groups of some ten to thirty verses by any hand that happened to be near Milton at the time. But, when it was complete, Phillips helped his uncle in carefully revising it, with minute attention to those matters of spelling and pointing in which the amanuensis might have failed. The first edition (1667), so far from being 'miserably deformed by the press,' was remarkably accurate. As Mr Masson says, 'very great care must have been bestowed on the revising of the proofs, either by Milton himself, or by some competent person who had undertaken to see the book through the press for him. It seems likely that Milton himself caused page after page to be read over slowly to him, and occasionally even the words to be spelt out.' Bentley insists that the changes in the second edition of 1674 were due to the editor. Phillips says of this second edition:—'amended, enlarg'd, and differently dispos'd as to the number of books' [xii. instead of x.; books vii. and x. being now divided] 'by his own hand, that is by his own appointment.' But the habit of mind which Bentley had formed by free conjectural criticism was such as to pass lightly over any such difficulties, even if he had clearly realised them. He felt confident in his own power of improving Milton's text; and he was eager to exercise it. The fact of Milton's blindness suggested a view of the text which he adopted; not, assuredly, without believing it; but with a belief rendered more easy by his wish.

Bentley's *Paradise Lost* raises an obvious question.

We know that his emendations of Milton are nearly all bad. The general style of argument which he applies to Milton is the same which he applies to the classical authors. Are his emendations of these also bad? I should answer: Many of his critical emendations, especially Latin, are bad: but many of them are good in a way and in a degree for which *Paradise Lost* afforded no scope. It is a rule applicable to most of Bentley's corrections, that their merit varies inversely with the soundness of the text. Where the text seemed altogether hopeless, he was at his best; where it was corrupted, but not deeply, he was usually good, though often not convincing; where it was true, yet difficult, through some trick (faulty in itself, perhaps) of individual thought or style, he was apt to meddle overmuch. It was his forte to make rough places smooth; his foible, to make smooth places rough. If *Paradise Lost* had come to Bentley as a manuscript largely defaced by grave blunders and deeply-seated corruptions, his restoration of it would probably have deserved applause. The fact that his edition was regarded as a proof of dotage, shows how erroneously his contemporaries had conceived the qualities of his previous work. Bentley's mind was logical, positive, acute; wonderfully acute, where intellectual problems were not complicated with moral sympathies. Sending flashes of piercing insight over a wide and then dim field, he made discoveries; among other things, he found probable or certain answers to many verbal riddles. His 'faculty of divination' was to himself a special source of joy and pride: nor unnaturally, when we recall its most brilliant feats. But verbal emendation was only one phase of his work: and, just because it was with him a mental indulgence, almost a passion, we must guard against assuming that the

average success with which he applied it is the chief criterion of his power.

The faults of Bentley's *Paradise Lost* are, in kind, the faults of his Horace, but are more evident to an English reader, and are worse in degree, since the English text, unlike the Latin, affords no real ground for suspicion. The intellectual acuteness which marks the Horace is present also in the notes on *Paradise Lost*, but seldom wins admiration, more often appears ridiculous, because the English reader can usually see that it is grotesquely misplaced. A great and characteristic merit of Bentley's classical work, its instructiveness to students of a foreign language and literature, is necessarily absent here. And the book was got ready for the press with extreme haste. Still, the editor of *Paradise Lost* is not the Horatian editor gone mad. He is merely the Horatian editor showing increased rashness in a still more unfavourable field, where failure was at once so gratuitous and so conspicuous as to look like self-caricature, while there was no proper scope for the distinctive qualities of his genius. As to poetical taste, we may at least make some allowance for the standards of the 'correct' period; let us think of Johnson's remarks on Milton's versification, and remember that some of Bentley's improvements on Milton were privately admired by Pope.

## CHAPTER XII.

### DOMESTIC LIFE. LAST YEARS.

AT the age of thirty-eight, when explaining his delay to answer Charles Boyle, Bentley spoke of his own '*natural aversion to all quarrels and broils.*' This has often, perhaps, been read with a smile by those who thought of his later feuds. I believe that it was quite true. Bentley was a born student. He was not, by innate impulse, a writer, still less an aspirant to prizes of the kind for which men chiefly wrangle. But his self-confidence had been exalted by the number of instances in which he had been able to explode fallacies, or to detect errors which had escaped the greatest of previous scholars. He became a dogmatic believer in the truth of his own instinctive perceptions. At last, opposition to his decrees struck him as a proof of deficient capacity, or else of moral obliquity. This habit of mind insensibly extended itself from verbal criticism into other fields of judgment. He grew less and less fit to deal with men on a basis of equal rights, because he too often carried into official or social intercourse the temper formed in his library by intellectual despotism over the blunders of the absent or the dead. He was rather too apt to treat those who dif-

ferred from him as if they were various readings that had cropped up from 'scrub manuscripts,' or 'scoundrel copies,' as he has it in his reply to Middleton. He liked to efface such persons as he would expunge false concords, or to correct them as he would remedy flagrant instances of hiatus. This was what made him so specially unfit for the peaceable administration of a College. It was hard for him to be *primus inter pares*, first among peers, but harder still to be *primus intra parietes*, to live within the same walls with those peers. The frequent personal association which the circumstances of his office involved was precisely calculated to show him constantly on his worst side. He would probably have made a better bishop, —though not, perhaps, a very good one,—just because his contact would have been less close and continual with those over whom he was placed. Bentley had many of the qualities of a beneficent ruler, but hardly of a constitutional ruler. If he had been the sole heir of Peisistratus, he would have bestowed the best gifts of paternal government on those Athenian blacksmiths to whom he compared Joshua Barnes, and no swords would have been wreathed with myrtle in honour of a tyrannicide.

This warm-hearted, imperious man, with affections the stronger because they were not diffuse, was seen to the greatest advantage in family life, either because his monarchy was undisputed, or because, there, he could reign without governing. His happy marriage brought him four children,—Elizabeth and Joanna,—a son, William, who died in earliest infancy,—and Richard, the youngest, born in 1708, who grew to be an accomplished but eccentric and rather aimless man; enough of a dilettante to win the good graces of Horace Walpole, and too little of a dependent to keep them.



It is pleasant to turn from the College feuds, and to think that within its precincts there was at least such a refuge from strife as the home in which these children grew up. The habits of the Bentley household were simple, and such as adapted themselves to the life of an indefatigable student. Bentley usually breakfasted alone in his library, and, at least in later years, was often not visible till dinner. When the *Spectator* was coming out, he took great delight in hearing the children read it aloud to him, and—as Joanna told her son—‘was so particularly amused by the character of Sir Roger de Coverley, that he took his literary deacease most seriously to heart.’ After evening prayers at ten, the family retired, while Bentley, ‘habited in his dressing-gown,’ returned to his books. In 1708 his eyes suffered for a short time from reading at night; but he kept up the habit long afterwards. The celebrated ‘Proposals for Printing’ the Greek Testament were drawn up by candle-light in a single evening. Latterly, he had a few intimate friends at Cambridge,—some five or six Fellows of the College, foremost among whom was Richard Walker,—and three or four other members of the University; just as in London his intercourse was chiefly with a very small and select group,—Newton, Dr Samuel Clarke, Dr Mead, and a few more. ‘His establishment,’ says his grandson, ‘was respectable, and his table affluently and hospitably served.’ ‘Of his pecuniary affairs he took no account; he had no use for money, and dismissed it entirely from his thoughts.’ Mrs Bentley managed everything. Can this be the Bentley, it will be asked, who built the staircase and the hen-house, and who practised extortion on the Doctors of Divinity? The fact seems to be as Cumberland puts it, that Bentley had no love of money for its own

sake. Many instances of his liberality are on record, especially to poor students, or in literary matters. But he had a strong feeling for the dignity of his station, and a frank conviction that the College ought to honour itself by seeing that his surroundings were appropriate; and he had also a Yorkshireman's share of the British dislike to being cheated. Bentley's total income was, for his position, but moderate, and his testamentary provision for his family was sufficiently slender to exempt him from the charge of penurious hoarding.

At one time Mrs Bentley and the children used to make an annual journey to London, where the Master of Trinity, as Royal Librarian, had official lodgings at Cotton House. Then there was an occasional visit to the Bernards in Huntingdonshire, or to Hampshire, after Elizabeth, the eldest daughter, had married Mr Humphrey Ridge of that county; and this was as much variety as the wisdom of our ancestors desired. At Cambridge Bentley took scarcely any exercise, except in pacing up and down a terrace-walk by the river, which was made when the Master's garden was laid out in 1717. We hear, however, of his joining a fishing expedition to Over, a place about six miles from Cambridge, though some may doubt whether Bentley had the right temperament for that pursuit. After middle age he was peculiarly liable to severe colds,—a result of sedentary life,—and was obliged to avoid draughts as much as possible. From 1727 he ceased to preside in the College Hall at festivals: and at about the same time he nominated a deputy at the 'acts' in the Divinity School. In 1729 it was complained that for many years he had discontinued his attendance in the College Chapel. One incident has good evidence. On an evening in 1724, just after his

degrees had been restored, he went to the Chapel ; the door-lock of the Master's stall was so rusty that he could not open it. Here are some contemporary verses preserved by Granger :—

The virger tugs with fruitless pains ;  
The rust invincible remains.  
Who can describe his woful plight,  
Plac'd thus in view, in fullest light,  
A spectacle of mirth, expos'd  
To sneering friends and giggling foes ?  
Then first, as 'tis from fame receiv'd,  
(But fame can't always be believ'd,)  
A blush, the sign of new-born grace,  
Gleam'd through the horrors of his face.  
He held it shameful to retreat,  
And worse to take the lower seat.  
The virger soon, with nimble bound,  
At once vaults o'er the wooden mound,  
And gives the door a furious knock,  
Which forc'd the disobedient lock.

After 1734 he practically ceased to attend the meetings of the Seniority : the last occasion on which he presided was Nov. 8, 1737. His inability or reluctance to leave his house is shown in 1739 by a curious fact. A Fellow of a College had been convicted of atheistical views by a private letter which another member of the same society had picked up in the quadrangle,—and read. The meeting of the Vice-Chancellor's Court at which sentence was to be passed was held at Trinity Lodge. Dr Monk regards this as 'a compliment to the father of the University,' but there was also a simpler motive. Only eight Heads of Houses had attended in the Schools ; nine were required for a verdict ; and, feeling the improbability of Bentley coming to them, they went to Bentley. On seeing the

accused—a puny person—the Master of Trinity observed, —‘What! is that the atheist? I expected to have seen a man as big as Burrough the beadle!’ Sentence was passed—expulsion from the University.

It seems to have been soon after this, in 1739, that Bentley had a paralytic stroke,—not a severe one, however. He was thenceforth unable to move easily without assistance, but we have his grandson’s authority for saying that Bentley ‘to the last hour of his life possessed his faculties firm and in their fullest vigour.’ He called himself—Markland says—‘an old trunk, which, if you let it alone, will last a long time; but if you jumble it by moving, will soon fall to pieces.’

Joanna Bentley, the second daughter, was her father’s favourite child,—‘Jug’ was his pet-name for her,—and she seems to have inherited much of his vivacity, with rather more of his turn for humorous satire than was at that period thought quite decorous in the gentle sex. Her son seems inclined to apologise for it; and Dr Monk, too, faintly hints his regret. At the age of eleven, she was the ‘Phœbe’ of a Pastoral in the *Spectator*,—the ‘Colin’ being John Byrom, B. A., of Trinity; and, after causing several members of the College to sigh, and a few to sing, Joanna was married, in 1728, to Denison Cumberland, of Trinity,—a grandson of the distinguished Bishop of Peterborough. Their son, Richard Cumberland, was a versatile author. Besides novels, comedies, and an epic poem, he wrote the once popular *Observer*, and *Anecdotes of Spanish Painters*. Goldsmith called him ‘the Terence of England;’ Walter Scott commented on his tendency ‘to reverse the natural and useful practice of courtship, and to throw upon the softer sex the task of wooing;’ but Cumberland’s name has no record more



pleasing than those *Memoirs* to which we chiefly owe our knowledge of Bentley's old age.

It was early in 1740 that death parted the old man from the companion who had shared so many years of storm or sunshine beyond the doors, but always of happiness within them. Richard Cumberland was eight years old when Mrs Bentley died. 'I have a perfect recollection of the person of my grandmother, and a full impression of her manners and habits, which though in some degree tinged with hereditary reserve and the primitive cast of character, were entirely free from the hypocritical cant and affected sanctity of the Oliverians.' (Her family, the Bernards, were related to the Cromwells.) A most favourable impression is given by a letter—one of those printed by Dr Luard at the end of Rud's *Diary*—in which she discusses the prospect (in 1732) of the College case being decided against Bentley. Her life had been gentle, kindly, and unselfish: her last words, which her daughter Joanna heard, were,—'It is all bright, it is all glorious.' Dreary indeed must have been Bentley's solitude now, but for his daughters. Elizabeth had returned to her father's house after the death of her husband, Mr Ridge; and henceforth Mrs Cumberland was much at Trinity Lodge, with her two children,—Richard, and a girl somewhat older. And now we get the best possible testimony to the loveable elements in Bentley's nature,—the testimony of children. 'He was the unwearied patron and promoter of all our childish sports....I have broken in upon him many a time' (says Cumberland) 'in his hours of study, when he would put his book aside, ring his hand-bell for his servant, and be led to his shelves to take down a picture-book for my amusement. I do not say that his good-nature always



gained its object, as the pictures which his books generally supplied me with, were anatomical drawings of dissected bodies,...but he had nothing better to produce.' 'Once, and only once, I recollect his giving me a gentle rebuke for making a most outrageous noise in the room over his library, and disturbing him in his studies; I had no apprehension of anger from him, and confidently answered that I could not help it, as I had been at battledore and shuttlecock with Master Gooch, the Bishop of Ely's son.' (This was the Dr Gooch who, as Vice-Chancellor, had suspended Bentley's degrees.) 'And I have been at this sport with his father,' he replied; 'but thine has been the more amusing game; so there's no harm done.' The boy's holidays from his school at Bury St Edmund's were now often spent at Trinity Lodge, and in the bright memories which they left with him his grandfather was the central figure. 'I was admitted to dine at his table, had my seat next to his chair, served him in many little offices.' Bentley saw what pleasure these gave the boy, and invented occasions to employ him.

Bentley's 'ordinary style of conversation was naturally lofty'—his grandson says. He also used *thou* and *thee* more than was usually considered polite, and this gave his talk a somewhat dictatorial tone. 'But the native candour and inherent tenderness of his heart could not long be veiled from observation, for his feelings and affections were at once too impulsive to be long repressed, and he too careless of concealment to attempt at qualifying them.' Instances of his good-nature are quoted which are highly characteristic in other ways too. At that time the Master and Seniors examined candidates for Fellowships orally as well as on paper. If Bentley

saw that a candidate was nervous, he 'was never known to press him,' says Cumberland; rather he 'would take all the pains of expounding on himself'—and credit the embarrassed youth with the answer. Once a burglar who had stolen some of Bentley's plate was caught 'with the very articles upon him,' and 'Commissary Greaves' was for sending him to gaol. Bentley interposed. 'Why tell the man he is a thief? He knows that well enough, without thy information, Greaves.—Hark ye, fellow, thou see'st the trade which thou hast taken up is an unprofitable trade; therefore get thee gone, lay aside an occupation by which thou can'st gain nothing but a halter, and follow that by which thou may'st earn an honest livelihood.' Everybody remonstrated, but the burglar was set at large. This was a thoroughly Bentleian way of showing how the quality of mercy can bless him that gives and him that takes. He never bestowed a thought on the principle; he was preoccupied by his own acute and confident perception that *this* man would not steal again; and he disposed of Commissary Greaves as if he had been a mere gloss, a redundant phrase due to interpolation.

Next to the Vice-Master, Dr Walker—to whom in 1739 the duties of Master were virtually transferred—Bentley's most frequent visitors were a few scholars,—such as Jeremiah Markland, an ingenious critic, with a real feeling for language,—Walter Taylor, the Regius Professor of Greek,—John Taylor, the well-known editor of Lysias and Demosthenes; and the two nephews, Thomas and Richard Bentley. At seventy, he learned to smoke; and he is believed to have liked port, but to have said of claret that 'it would be port if it could.' He would sometimes speak of his early labours and aims,

but the literary subject uppermost in his mind seems to have been his Homer. One evening, when Richard Cumberland was at the Lodge in his holidays, his schoolmaster, Arthur Kinsman, called with Dr Walker. Kinsman 'began to open his school-books upon Bentley, and had drawn him into Homer; Greek now rolled in torrents from the lips of Bentley,...in a strain delectable, indeed, to the ear, but not very edifying to poor little me and the ladies.'

In March, 1742—about four months before Bentley's death—the fourth book of the *Dunciad* came out, with Pope's highly-wrought but curiously empty satire on the greatest scholar then living in England or in Europe. Bentley heads an academic throng who offer homage at the throne of Dulness:—

Before them march'd that awful Aristarch,  
Plow'd was his front with many a deep remark:  
His hat, which never vail'd to human pride,  
Walker with rev'rence took, and laid aside.

Then Bentley introduces himself to the goddess as

Thy mighty scholiast, whose unwearied pains  
Made Horace dull, and humbled Milton's strains.

The final touch—'Walker, our hat!—nor more he deign'd to say'—was taken from a story current then. Philip Miller, the botanist, had called on Bentley at Trinity Lodge, and after dinner plied him with classical questions until Bentley, having exhausted such mild hints as 'drink your wine, Sir!', exclaimed, 'Walker! my hat'—and left the room. Cumberland remembers the large, broad-brimmed hat hanging on a peg at the back of Bentley's arm-chair, who sometimes wore it in his study to shade his eyes; and after his death it could

be seen in the College-rooms of the friend with whose name Pope has linked it.

Pope had opened fire on Bentley long before this. The first edition of the *Dunciad* (1728) had the line—*'Bentley his mouth with classic flatt'ry opes'*—but in the edition of 1729 *'Bentley'* was changed to *Welsted*: and when—after Bentley's death—his name was once more placed there, it was explained as referring to *Thomas Bentley*, the nephew. Then in the *'Epistle to Arbuthnot'* (1735) Pope coupled Bentley with the Shaksperian critic Theobald,—*'Tibbalds'* rhyming to *'ribalds;'* and in the *Epistle* imitating that of Horace to Augustus (1737), after criticising Milton, adds:—

Not that I'd lop the beauties from his book,  
Like slashing Bentley with his desprate hook.

Some indignant protest from Thomas Bentley seems to have roused Pope's ire to the more elaborate attack in the fourth book of the *Dunciad*. Why did Pope dislike Bentley? *'I talked against his Homer'*—this was Bentley's own account of it—*'and the portentous cub never forgives.'* It is more likely that some remarks had been repeated to Pope, than that Bentley should have said to the poet at Bishop Atterbury's table, *'A pretty poem, Mr Pope, but you must not call it Homer.'* This was gossip dramatising the cause of the grudge. Then Pope's friendship with Atterbury and Swift would lead him to take the Boyle view of the Phalaris affair. And Warburton, Pope's chief ally of the *Dunciad* period, felt towards Bentley that peculiar form of jealous antipathy with which an inaccurate writer on scholarly subjects will sometimes regard scholars. After Bentley's death, Warburton spoke of him as *'a truly great and injured man,'* &c.; before it, he invariably, though timidly, dis-



paraged him. Swift never assailed Bentley after the *Tale of a Tub*. But Arbuthnot, another member of the Scriblerus Club, parodied Bentley's Horace and Phaedrus in the *Miscellanies* of 1727; and published a supplement to *Gulliver's Travels*, describing 'The State of Learning in the Empire of Lilliput.' 'Bullum is a tall raw-boned man, I believe near six inches and a half high; from his infancy he applied himself with great industry to the old Blefuscudian language, in which he made such a progress that he almost forgot his native Lilliputian'—an unlucky stroke, seeing that Bentley's command of English was one of his marked gifts. This, however, is characteristic of all the satire directed against Bentley by the literary men who allowed a criticism of taste, but treated a criticism of texts as soulless pedantry. There is plenty of banter, but not one point. And the cause is plain,—they understood nothing of Bentley's work. Take Pope's extended satire in the fourth *Dunciad*. It is merely a series of variations, as brilliant and as thin as Thalberg's setting of 'Home, sweet home,' on the simple theme, 'dull Bentley.' A small satellite of Pope, one David Mallet, wrote a 'Poem on Verbal Criticism,' in which he greets Bentley as 'great eldest-born of Dulness'! Mallet deserves to be remembered with Garth.

In June, 1742, having completed eighty years and some months, Bentley was still able to examine for the Craven University Scholarships,—when Christopher Smart was one of the successful competitors. A few weeks later the end came. His grandson tells it thus. 'He was seized with a complaint' (pleuritic fever, it was said) 'that in his opinion seemed to indicate a necessity of immediate bleeding; Dr Heberden, then a young physician practising in Cambridge, was of a contrary opinion,



and the patient acquiesced.' Bentley died on July 14, 1742. Dr Wallis, of Stamford—an old friend and adviser who was summoned, but arrived too late—said that the measure suggested by the sufferer was that which he himself would have taken.

Bentley was buried in the chapel of Trinity College, on the north side of the communion-rails. The Latin oration then customary was pronounced by Philip Yonge, afterwards Public Orator, and Bishop of Norwich. The day of Bentley's funeral was that on which George Baker left Eton for King's College,—the eminent physician to whom it was partly due that Cambridge became the University of Porson. The small square stone in the pavement of the College Chapel bears these words only :—

H. S. E.

RICHARDUS BENTLEY S. T. P. R.

Obiit xiv. Jul. 1742.

Ætatis 80.

[Sancti  
Theologi  
Profes-  
Regius

The words *Magister Collegii* would naturally have been added to the second line : but in the view of those Fellows who acknowledged the judgment of April, 1738, the Mastership had since then been vacant. In the hall of the College, where many celebrated names are commemorated by the portraits on the walls, places of honour are assigned to Bacon, Barrow, Newton, and Bentley. The features of the great scholar speak with singular force from the canvas of Thornhill, who painted him in his forty-eighth year, the very year in which his struggle with the College began. That picture, Bentley's own bequest, is in the Master's Lodge. The pose of the head is haughty, almost defiant ; the eyes, which are large, prominent, and full of bold vivacity, have a light

in them as if Bentley were looking straight at an impostor whom he had detected, but who still amused him; the nose, strong and slightly tip-tilted, is moulded as if nature had wished to show what a nose can do for the combined expression of scorn and sagacity; and the general effect of the countenance, at a first glance, is one which suggests power—frank, self-assured, sarcastic, and, I fear we must add, insolent: yet, standing a little longer before the picture, we become aware of an essential kindness in those eyes of which the gaze is so direct and intrepid; we read in the whole face a certain keen veracity; and the sense grows,—this was a man who could hit hard, but who would not strike a foul blow, and whose ruling instinct, whether always a sure guide or not, was to pierce through falsities to truth.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### BENTLEY'S PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF SCHOLARSHIP.

It will not be the object of these concluding pages to weigh Bentley's merits against those of any individual scholar in past or present times. The attempt, in such a case, to construct an order of merit amuses the competitive instinct of mankind, and may be an interesting exercise of private judgment, but presupposes a common measure for claims which are often, by their nature, incommensurable. A more useful task is to consider the nature of Bentley's place in that development of scholarship which extends from the fifteenth century to our own day. Caution may be needed to avoid drawing lines of a delusive sharpness between periods of which the characteristics rather melt into each other. The fact remains, however, that general tendencies were successively prevalent in a course which can be traced. And Bentley stands in a well-marked relation both to those who preceded and to those who followed him.

At his birth in 1662 rather more than two centuries had elapsed since the beginning of the movement which was to restore ancient literature to the modern world. During the earlier of these two centuries—from about 1450 to

1550—the chief seat of the revival had been Italy, which thus retained by a new title that intellectual primacy of Europe which had seemed on the point of passing from the lands of the south. Latin literature engrossed the early Italian scholars, who regarded themselves as literary heirs of Rome, restored to their rights after ages of dispossession. The beauty of classical form came as a surprise and a delight to these children of the middle age; they admired and enjoyed; they could not criticise. The more rhetorical parts of silver Latinity pleased them best; a preference natural to the Italian genius. And meanwhile Greek studies had remained in the background. The purest and most perfect examples of form,—those which Greek literature affords,—were not present to the mind of the earlier Renaissance. Transalpine students resorted to Italy as for initiation into sacred mysteries. The highest eminence in classical scholarship was regarded as a birthright of Italians. The small circle of immortals which included Poggio and Politian admitted only one foreigner, Erasmus, whose cosmopolitan tone gave no wound to the national susceptibility of Italians, and whose conception, though larger than theirs, rested on the same basis. That basis was the *imitatio veterum*, the literary reproduction of ancient form. Erasmus was nearer than any of his predecessors or contemporaries to the idea of a critical philology. His natural gifts for it are sufficiently manifest. But his want of critical method, and of the sense which requires it, appears in his edition of the Greek Testament.

In the second half of the sixteenth century a new period is opened by a Frenchman of Italian origin, Joseph Scaliger. Hitherto scholarship had been busy

with the form of classical literature. The new effort is to comprehend the matter. By his Latin compositions and translations Scaliger is connected with the Italian age of Latin stylists. But his most serious and characteristic work was the endeavour to frame a critical chronology of the ancient world. He was peculiarly well-fitted to effect a transition from the old to the new aim, because his industry could not be reproached with dullness. 'People had thought that æsthetic pleasure could be purchased only at the cost of criticism,' says Bernays; 'now they saw the critical workshop itself lit up with the glow of artistic inspiration.' A different praise belongs to Scaliger's great and indefatigable contemporary, Isaac Casaubon. His groans over Athenæus, which sometimes reverberate in the brilliant and faithful pages of Mr Pattison, appear to warrant Casaubon's comparison of his toils to the labours of penal servitude (*'catenati in ergastulo labores'*). Bernhardy defines the merit of Casaubon as that of having been the first to popularise a connected knowledge of ancient life and manners. Two things had now been done. The charm of Latin style had been appreciated. The contents of ancient literature, both Latin and Greek, had been surveyed, and partly registered.

Bentley approached ancient literature on the side which had been chiefly cultivated in the age nearest to his own. When we first find him at work, under Stillingfleet's roof, or in the libraries of Oxford, he is evidently less occupied with the form than with the matter. He reads extensively, making indexes for his own use; he seeks to possess the contents of the classical authors, whether already printed or accessible only in manuscript. An incident told by Cumberland is sug-



gestive. Bentley was talking one day with his favourite daughter, when she hinted a regret that he had devoted so much of his time to criticism, rather than to original composition. He acknowledged the justice of the remark. 'But the wit and genius of those old heathens,' he said, 'beguiled me: and as I despaired of raising myself up to their standard upon fair ground, I thought the only chance I had of looking over their heads was to get upon their shoulders.' These are the words of a man who had turned to ancient literature in the spirit of Scaliger rather than in that of the Italian Latinists.

But in the Letter to Mill,—when Bentley was only twenty-eight,—we perceive that his wide reading had already made him alive to the necessity of a work which no previous scholar had thoroughly or successfully undertaken. This work was the purification of the classical texts. They were still deformed by a mass of errors which could not even be detected without the aid of accurate knowledge, grammatical and metrical. The great scholars before Bentley, with all their admirable merits, had in this respect resembled aeronauts, gazing down on a beautiful and varied country, in which, however, the pedestrian is liable to be stopped by broken bridges or quaking swamps. These difficulties of the ground, to which Bentley's patient march had brought him, engaged his *first* care. No care could hope to be successful—this he saw clearly—unless armed with the resources which previous scholarship had provided. The critic of a text should command the stylist's tact in language, and also the knowledge of the commentator. In the Latin preface to his edition of Horace, Bentley explains that his work is to be textual, not illustrative; and then proceeds:—

All honour to the learned men who have expatiated in the field of commentary. They have done a most valuable work,

which would now have to be done from the beginning, if they had not been beforehand ; a work without which my reader cannot hope to pass the threshold of these present labours. That wide reading and erudition, that knowledge of all Greek and Latin antiquity, in which the commentaries have their very essence, are merely subordinate aids to textual criticism. A man should have all that at his fingers' ends, before he can venture, without insane rashness, to pass criticism on any ancient author. But, besides this, there is need of the keenest judgment, of sagacity and quickness, of a certain divining tact and inspiration (*divinandi quadam peritia et μαντική*), as was said of Aristarchus,—a faculty which can be acquired by no constancy of toil or length of life, but comes solely by the gift of nature and the happy star.

Let it be noted that Bentley's view is relative to his own day. It is because such men as Casaubon have gone before that he can thus define his own purpose. Learning, inspired by insight, is now to be directed to the attainment of textual accuracy. Bentley's distinction is not so much the degree of his insight,—rare as this was,—but rather his method of applying it. It might be said :—Bentley turned the course of scholarship aside from grander objects, philosophical, historical, literary,—and forced it into a narrow verbal groove. If Bentley's criticism had been verbal only—which it was not—such an objection would still be unjust. We in these days are accustomed to Greek and Latin texts which, though they may be still more or less unsound, are seldom so unsound as largely to obscure the author's meaning, or seriously to mar our enjoyment of his work as a work of art. But for this state of things we have mainly to thank the impulse given by Bentley.

In Bentley's time very many Latin authors, and nearly all Greek authors, were known only through texts teeming with every fault that could spring from a

scribe's ignorance of grammar, metre, and sense. Suppose a piece of very bad English handwriting, full of erasures and corrections, sent to be printed at a foreign press. The foreign printer's first proof would be likely to contain some flagrant errors which a very slight acquaintance with our language would suffice to amend, and also many other errors which an Englishman could correct with more or less confidence, but in which a foreign corrector of the press would not even perceive anything amiss. In 1700 most of the classical texts, especially Greek, were very much what such a proof-sheet would be if only those flagrant errors had been removed which a very imperfect knowledge of English would reveal. Relatively to his contemporaries, Bentley might be compared with the Englishman of our supposed case, and his predecessors with the foreign correctors of the press.

Space fails for examples, but I may give one. An epigram of Callimachus begins thus;—

τὴν ἀλὴν Εὐδημος, ἐφ' ἧς ἄλα λιτὸν ἐπελθὼν  
χειμῶνας μεγάλους ἐξέφυγεν δανέων,  
θῆκε θεοῖς Σαμόθραξι.

This had been taken to mean:—‘*Eudemus dedicated to the Samothracian gods that ship on which, after crossing a smooth sea, he escaped from great storms* [reading Δαναῶν] *of the Danaï* ;’—i.e. such storms as Æneas and his companions suffered; or perhaps, storms off the coast of the Troad. Bentley changed one letter only (λ to σ, giving ἐπίσθων), and showed the true meaning. ‘*Eudemus dedicated to the Samothracian gods that salt-cellar from which he ate frugal salt until he had escaped from the troublous waves of usury.*’ Eudemus was not an adventurous mariner, but an impecunious person who had literally adopted the advice of the Greek sage,—‘Borrow from thyself by reducing thy diet,’—and had gradually

extricated himself from debt by living on bread and salt.

The pleader for large views of antiquity, who is inclined to depreciate the humbler tasks of verbal criticism, will allow that the frequency of such misapprehensions was calculated to confuse. It was not always, indeed, that Bentley drew the veil aside with so light a touch; but he has a reason to give. 'I would have you remember, it is immeasurably more difficult to make emendations at this day (in 1711) than it was in former years. Those points which a mere collation of the manuscripts flashed or forced upon the mind have generally been seized and appropriated; and there is hardly anything left, save what is to be extracted, by insight alone, from the essence of the thought and the temper of the style. Hence, in my recension of Horace, I give more things on conjecture than through the help of manuscripts; and unless I am wholly deceived, conjecture has usually been the safer guide. Where readings vary, the very repute of the manuscript often misleads, and provokes the desire of change. But if a man is tempted to propose conjectures against the witness of all the manuscripts, Fear and Shame pluck him by the ear; his sole guides are reason,—the light from the author's thoughts, and their constraining power. Suppose that one or two manuscripts furnish a reading which others discountenance. It is in vain that you demand belief for your one or two witnesses against a multitude, unless you bring as many arguments as would almost suffice to prove the point of themselves, without any manuscript testimony at all. Shake off, then, the exclusive reverence for scribes. Dare to have a mind of your own. Gauge each reading by the mould of the writer's expression and the stamp of his style; then, and not sooner, pronounce your verdict.'



No school of textual criticism, however conservative, has denied that conjecture is sometimes our sole resource. Bentley differs from the principles of more recent criticism chiefly in recognising less distinctly that conjecture should be the *last* resource. Great as was his tact in the use of manuscripts, he had, as a rule, too little of that respect for diplomatic evidence which appears, for instance, in Ritschl's remark that almost any manuscript will sometimes, however rarely, deserve more belief than we can give even to a conjecture which is intrinsically probable. The contrast, here, between Bentley's procedure and that of Casaubon,—whose caution is often more in the spirit of modern textual science,—may be illustrated by one example. Some verses of the poet Ion stood thus in the texts of the geographer Strabo:—

Εὐβοίδα μὲν γῆν λεπτὸς Εὐρίπου κλύδων  
 Βοιωτίας ἐχώρισ' ἀκτῆς, ἐκτέμνων  
 πρὸς Κρήτα πορθμόν.

When Casaubon had made the necessary change ἐκτεμών, he held his hand. 'I can point out,' said Casaubon, 'that this place is corrupt: amend it I cannot, *without the help of manuscripts*.' Not so Bentley: he confidently gives us, ἀκτὴν ἐκτεμών | προβλήτα πορθμῷ. Now, if Casaubon was ineffectual, Bentley was precipitate. Nothing, surely, was needed but to shift Βοιωτίας from the beginning to the end of its verse. If we suppose that the words πρὸς Κρήτα πορθμόν belonged to what precedes, and not (as is quite possible) to something now lost which followed, then we get a clear sense, expressed in a thoroughly classical form. 'The narrow waters of the Euripus have parted Euboea from the Boeotian shore, so shaping it (ἐκτεμών), that it looks toward the Cretan sea: ' i.e. the island of Euboea runs out in a S.E.S. direction. Ancient writers often denote *aspect* by naming



a region, though distant and invisible, towards which a land looks. Thus Herodotus describes a part of the north Sicilian coast as that which 'looks towards Tyrrhenia' (πρὸς Τυρσηνίην τετραμμένη). Milton imitates this device:

Where the great vision of the guarded Mount  
Looks towards Namancos and Bayona's hold.

I never understood how Milton came to write those lines till I thought of seeking a clue in Camden (of whom there is another trace in *Lycidas*);—and he gave it. Speaking of the Cornish coast adjacent to St Michael's Mount, Camden remarks, 'there is no other place in this island that looks towards Spain.' This fact was present to Milton's mind, and he wished to work it in; then he consulted Mercator's Atlas, where he found the town of Namancos marked near Cape Finisterre, and the Castle of Bayona also prominent; these gave him his ornate periphrasis for 'Spain.'

Though Bentley had little poetical taste, it was in poetry that he exercised his faculty of emendation, not only with most zest, but with most success. The reason is simple. Metre enabled Bentley to show a knowledge in which no predecessor had equalled him; it also supplied a framework which limited his rashness. In prose, his temerity was sometimes wanton. We have seen (chapter x.) how his *illa* would have swept *Itala* from the text of Augustine. One other instance may be given. Seneca compares a man who cannot keep his temper to one who cannot control his limbs. 'Aegros scimus nervos esse, cum invitis nobis moventur. Senex aut infirmi corporis est, qui, cum ambulare vult, *currit*.' 'We know that something is wrong with our nerves, when they act against our will. It is only an old man, or an invalid, who, when he means to walk, *runs*.' By '*currit*,' Seneca describes a well-known symptom of

degeneration in the nervous system, which modern medical science terms 'festination.' 'Now,' says Bentley, 'I do not see how this feeble person can show such agility. Clearly *currit* should be *corruit*. He tries to walk—and *tumbles down*.' Bentley did not observe that the sentence just before proves 'currit' to be right: 'Speed is not to be desired,' says Seneca, 'unless it can be checked at our pleasure,...and reduced from a run to a walk' (a *cursu ad gradum reduci*). Of previous scholars, the best-skilled in metre was Scaliger. Yet Scaliger's acquaintance with the metres of the *classical* age was by no means accurate; thus his anapaests have the same fault as those of Buchanan and Grotius; and the iambic verses which he prefixed to his work *De Emendatione Temporum* have two metrical mistakes in four lines. While invariably mentioning Casaubon with the respect due to so great a name, Bentley has more than once occasion to indicate the false quantities which his conjectures involve. Thus a line of Sophocles, as given by Suidas, begins with the words *πέπλους* ('robes') *τενίσαι*. What is *τενίσαι*? Casaubon—followed by Meursius and by Gataker (one of the best English Hellenists before Bentley)—proposed *κτενίσαι*, 'to comb' or 'card.' Pointing out that this will not do, since the second syllable must be long, Bentley restores *πέπλους τε νῆσαι*, 'and to weave robes.'

As a commentator, he deals chiefly, though not exclusively, with points of grammar or metre bearing on the criticism of the text. Here he has two merits, each in a high degree; he instructs and suggests. The notes on Horace and Manilius, for example, constantly fail to persuade, but seldom fail to teach. It is to be wished that Bentley had written commentary, not merely in support of emendations, but continuously illustrating the language and matter of classical authors. If such a

commentary had been added to his critical notes on Aristophanes, the whole must have been a great work. His power in *general* commentary is best seen in his treatment of particular points raised by his argument on the Letters of Phalaris. Take, for instance, his remarks on the sophist's use of *πρόνοια* to mean 'divine Providence,' and of *στοιχεῖον* as 'a natural element;' where he shows that, before Plato, the former was used only of human forecast, and the latter to denote a letter of the alphabet: or, again, his remark on such phrases as *λέγεται*, 'it is said'—that Greek writers commonly use such phrases, not to intimate doubt, but, on the contrary, where the literary witnesses are more numerous than can conveniently be enumerated. Other comments are of yet larger scope. Thus, speaking of the fact that most ecclesiastical writers place the date of Pythagoras too low, he notices the need of allowing for a general disturbing cause,—the tendency to represent Greek antiquity as more recent than Jewish. Answering the objection that a Greek comedy would not have admitted a glaring anachronism, Bentley reminds Boyle that, in one of these comedies, Hercules comes on the scene with his private tutor, who gives him his choice of several standard works, including Homer; but the young hero chooses a treatise on cookery which was popular in the dramatist's time. Some of Bentley's happiest comments of this kind occur in his reply to Anthony Collins, who in his 'Discourse of Free-Thinking' had appealed to the most eminent of the ancients. Here, for instance, is a remark on Cicero's philosophical dialogues. 'In all the disputes he introduces between the various sects, after the speeches are ended, every man sticks where he was before; not one convert is made (as is common in modern dialogue), nor brought over in the smallest article. For he avoided that

violation of decorum ; he had observed, in common life, that all persevered in their sects, and maintained every nostrum without reserve.'

Bentley's 'higher criticism'—of ancient history, chronology, philosophy, literature—is mainly represented by the dissertation on Phalaris : but his calibre can also be estimated by his sketchy treatment of particular topics in the reply to Collins and in the Boyle Lectures. Of the scholars before Bentley, Usher and Selden might be partly compared with him in this province ; but the only one, perhaps, who had built similar work on a comparable basis of classical learning was Scaliger. In Bentley's estimation, to judge by the tone of his references to Scaliger, no one stood higher. With all the differences between Bentley and Scaliger, there was this essential resemblance, that both men vivified great masses of learning by ardent, though dissimilar, genius :

*Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus*

*Mens agitat molem, et magno se in corpore miscet.*

While Scaliger had constantly before him the conception of antiquity as a whole to be mentally grasped, Bentley's criticism rested on a knowledge more complete in detail ; it was also conducted with a closer and more powerful logic. The fact which has told most against the popular diffusion of Bentley's fame is that he is so much greater than any one of his books. Probably many school-boys have passed through a stage of secretly wondering why so much was thought of this Bentley, known to them only as the proposer of some rash emendations on Horace. Bentley's true greatness is not easily understood until his work has been surveyed in its entirety, with a clear sense of the time at which it was done ; until the original learning and native power of his method are appreciated apart from the sometimes brilliant, sometimes



faulty result ; until, in short, the letter of his record is lit up for us by the living force of his character and mind.

What has been the nature of Bentley's influence on the subsequent course of scholarship ? In the first place it cannot be properly said that he founded a school. That phrase may express the relation of disciples to the master who has personally formed them, as Ruhnken belongs to the school of Hemsterhuys ; or, where there has been no personal intercourse, it may denote the tradition of a well-defined scope or style ; as the late Richard Shilleto (in his masterly edition of Demosthenes 'On the Embassy,' for instance) belongs to the school of Porson. Wolf said that if Cambridge had required Bentley to lecture on classics, he would probably have left a more distinct impress on some of those who came after him. Though the tone of Wolf's remark is more German than English, it applies with peculiar point to Bentley, in whom the scholar was before all things the man, and who often writes like one who would have preferred to speak. But neither thus, nor by set models of literary achievement, did Bentley create anything so definite—or so narrow—as a school. Goethe used the word 'daemonic' to describe a power of mind over mind which eludes natural analysis, but seems to involve a peculiar union of keen insight with moral self-reliance. In the sphere of scholarship, the influence which Bentley's spirit has exerted through his writings might be called a great 'daemonic' energy, a force which cannot be measured,—like that, for instance, of Porson,—by the positive effect of particular discoveries ; a force which operates not only by the written letter, but also, and more widely still, by suggestion, stimulus, inspiration, almost as vivid as could be communicated by the voice, the countenance, the apprehended nature of a present teacher.



Bentley's influence has flowed in two main streams,—the historical and literary criticism of classical antiquity, as best seen in the dissertation on Phalaris; the verbal criticism, as seen in his work on classical texts. Holland, and then Germany, received both currents. Wolf's inquiry into the origin of the Homeric poems, Niebuhr's examination of Roman legends, are the efforts of a criticism to which Bentley's dissertation on Phalaris gave the first pattern of method. On the other hand, Hermann's estimate of Bentley's Terence is one of the earlier testimonies to the effect which Bentley's verbal criticism had exercised; and Professor Nettleship has told us that the late Maurice Haupt, in his lectures at Berlin on the Epistles of Horace, ranked Bentley second to no other scholar. We, Bentley's countrymen, have felt his influence chiefly in the way of textual criticism. The historical and literary criticism by which he stimulated such men as Wolf was comparatively unappreciated in England until its effects returned upon this country from Germany. Bunsen could justly say, 'historical philology is the discovery of Bentley,—the heritage and glory of German learning.' At Cambridge, Bentley's home,—where Markland, Wasse, and John Taylor had known him personally,—it was natural that the contemporary view of his merits should be coloured by his own estimate; and he considered verbal emendation as his own forte. This opinion prevailed in the Cambridge tradition, which from Markland and Taylor passed into the school of Porson. It was in vain that Richard Dawes disparaged Bentley's textual criticism. Warburton and Lowth were more successful in prejudicing English opinion against other aspects of his work. That his labours on the Greek Testament were so little known in England from his death to Lachmann's time, is chiefly due to the fact (noticed by Tregelles) that

Bishop Marsh, in translating Michaelis, omitted the passage relating to Bentley. But while English recognition was thus limited, Holland honoured him by the mouths of Ruhnken and Valckenaer. And the memoir of Bentley by F. A. Wolf may be regarded as registering an estimate which Germany has not essentially altered.

The place of Bentley in literature primarily depends on the fact that he represents England among a few great scholars, of various countries, who helped to restore classical learning in Europe. Nor is he merely one among them; he is one with whom an epoch begins. Erasmus marks the highest point reached in the sixteenth century by the genial study of antiquity on its literary side. Scaliger expresses the effort, at once erudite and artistic, to comprehend antiquity as a whole in the light of verified history. Casaubon embodies the devoted endeavour to comprehend ancient society in the light of its recorded manners, without irradiating or disturbing the effect by any play of personal thought or feeling. With Bentley that large conception of antiquity on the 'real' side is still present, but as a condition tacitly presupposed, not as the evident guide of his immediate task. He feels the greatness of his predecessors as it could be felt only by their peer, but sees that the very foundations on which they built—the classical books themselves—must be rendered sound, if the edifice is to be upheld or completed. He does not disparage that 'higher' criticism in which his own powers were so signally proved; rather his object is to establish it firmly on the only basis which can securely support it, the basis of ascertained texts. His labours were fruitful both in Greek and in Latin. However we may estimate his felicity in the two languages respectively, it cannot be said that he gave to either a clear preference over the other.

This is distinctive of his position relatively to the general course of subsequent scholarship. During the latter part of the eighteenth century several causes conspired to fix attention upon Greek. The elastic freedom of the Greek language and literature, of Greek action and art, was congenial to the spirit of that time, insurgent as it was against traditional authority, and impatient to find a reasonable order of life by a return to nature. Wolf, in 1795, touched a chord which vibrated throughout Europe when he claimed the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as groups of songs which in a primitive age had spoken directly to the hearts of the people. His theory, raising a host of special questions, stimulated research in the whole range of that matchless literature which begins with Homer. The field of Greek studies, as compared with Latin, was still comparatively fresh. Latin had long been familiar as the language which scholars wrote, or even spoke; and the further progress of Latin learning was delayed by the belief that there was little more to learn. Greek, on the other hand, attracted acute minds not only by its intrinsic charm, but by the hope of discovery; the Greek scholar, like the Greek sailor of old, was attended by visions of treasures that might await him in the region of the sunset.

Porson was born in 1759 and died in 1808. In his life-time, and for more than a generation after his death, scholars were principally occupied with Greek. Among many eminent names, it would be enough to mention Wyttienbach, Brunck, Hermann, Boeckh, Lobeck, Bekker, Elmsley, Dobree, Blomfield, Gaisford, Thirlwall. In Latin scholarship, Heyne's *Virgil* was perhaps the most considerable performance of Porson's day. Then Niebuhr arose, and turned new currents of interest towards Rome. His examination of early Roman tradition did much the

same work for Latin which Wolf's Homeric theory had done for Greek. Ideas of startling novelty stimulated the critical study of a whole literature; and the value of the impulse was independent of the extent to which the ideas themselves were sound. Niebuhr's thoughts, like Wolf's, were given to the world in a propitious hour. Wolf broached views welcome to the mind of the Revolution; Niebuhr proposed a complex problem of fascinating interest at a moment when intellectual pursuits were resumed with a new zest after the exhaustion of the Napoleonic wars. And then, at no long interval, came the works which may be regarded as fundamental in the recent Latin philology,—those of Lachmann, Ritschl, Mommsen.

Bentley's name is the last of first-rate magnitude which occurs above the point at which Greek and Latin studies begin to diverge. His critical method, his pregnant ideas have influenced the leaders of progress in both fields. Wolf's memoir of Bentley has been mentioned. Niebuhr also speaks of him as towering like a giant amid a generation of dwarfs. His genius was recognised by Ritschl as by Porson. It is still possible to ask, Was Bentley stronger in Greek or in Latin? I have heard a very eminent scholar say,—in Latin: the general voice would probably say,—in Greek: and this is hardly disputable, if our test is to be success in textual criticism. Bentley has given few, if any, Latin emendations so good as his best on Aristophanes, Callimachus, Nicander and some other Greek authors. Yet the statement needs to be guarded and explained. In Bentley's time, Latin studies were more advanced than Greek. Bentley's emendations, as a general rule, are best when the text is worst. The Greek texts, in which the first harvest had not yet been reaped, offered him a



better field than the Latin. His personal genius, with its vivacity somewhat impatient of formula, was also more Greek than Latin; his treatment of Greek usually seems more sympathetic; but it might be doubted whether his positive knowledge of the Latin language and literature was inferior. If it is said that there are flaws in his Latin prose, it may be replied that we have none of his Greek prose.

The gain of scholarship during the last fifty years has been chiefly in three provinces,—study of manuscripts, study of inscriptions, and comparative philology. The direct importance of archæology for classical learning has of late years been winning fuller recognition—to the advantage of both. In Bentley's time no one of these four studies had yet become scientific. That very fact best illustrates the calibre of the man who, a century and a half ago, put forth principles of textual criticism afterwards adopted by Lachmann; merited the title, 'first of critics,' from such an editor of Greek inscriptions as Boeckh; divined the presence of the digamma in the text of Homer; treated an obscure branch of numismatics with an insight which the most recent researches, aided by new resources, recognise as extraordinary. Bentley's qualities, mental and moral, fitted him to be a pioneer over a wide region, rather than, like Porson, the perfect cultivator of a limited domain; Bentley cleared new ground, made new paths, opened new perspectives, ranged through the length and breadth of ancient literature as Hercules, in the *Trachiniae* of Sophocles, claims to have roamed through Hellas, sweeping from hill, lake and forest those monstrous forms before which superstition had quailed, or which helpless apathy had suffered to infest the dark places of the land.

Probably the study of classical antiquity, in the



largest sense, has never been more really vigorous than it is at the present day. If so, it is partly because that study relies no longer upon a narrow or exclusive prescription, but upon a reasonable perception of its proper place among the studies which belong to a liberal education; and because the diffusion of that which is specially named science has at the same time spread abroad the only spirit in which any kind of knowledge can be prosecuted to a result of lasting intellectual value. While every year tends to refine the subdivision of labour in that vast field, Bentley's work teaches a simple lesson which is still applicable to every part of it. The literary activity of the present day has multiplied attractive facilities for becoming acquainted with the ancient classics at second hand. Every sensible person will rejoice that such facilities exist; they are excellent in their own way. Only it is important not to forget the difference between the knowledge at second hand and the knowledge at first hand, whether regard is had to the educational effect of the process, or to the worth of the acquisition, or to the hope of further advance. Even with a Bentley's power, a Bentley could have been made only by his method,—by his devoted and systematic study, not of books about the classics, but of the classical texts themselves; by testing, at each step, his comprehension of what he read; by not allowing the mere authority of tradition to supersede the free exercise of independent judgment; and by always remembering that the very right of such judgment to independence must rest on the patience, the intelligence, the completeness with which the tradition itself has been surveyed.





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